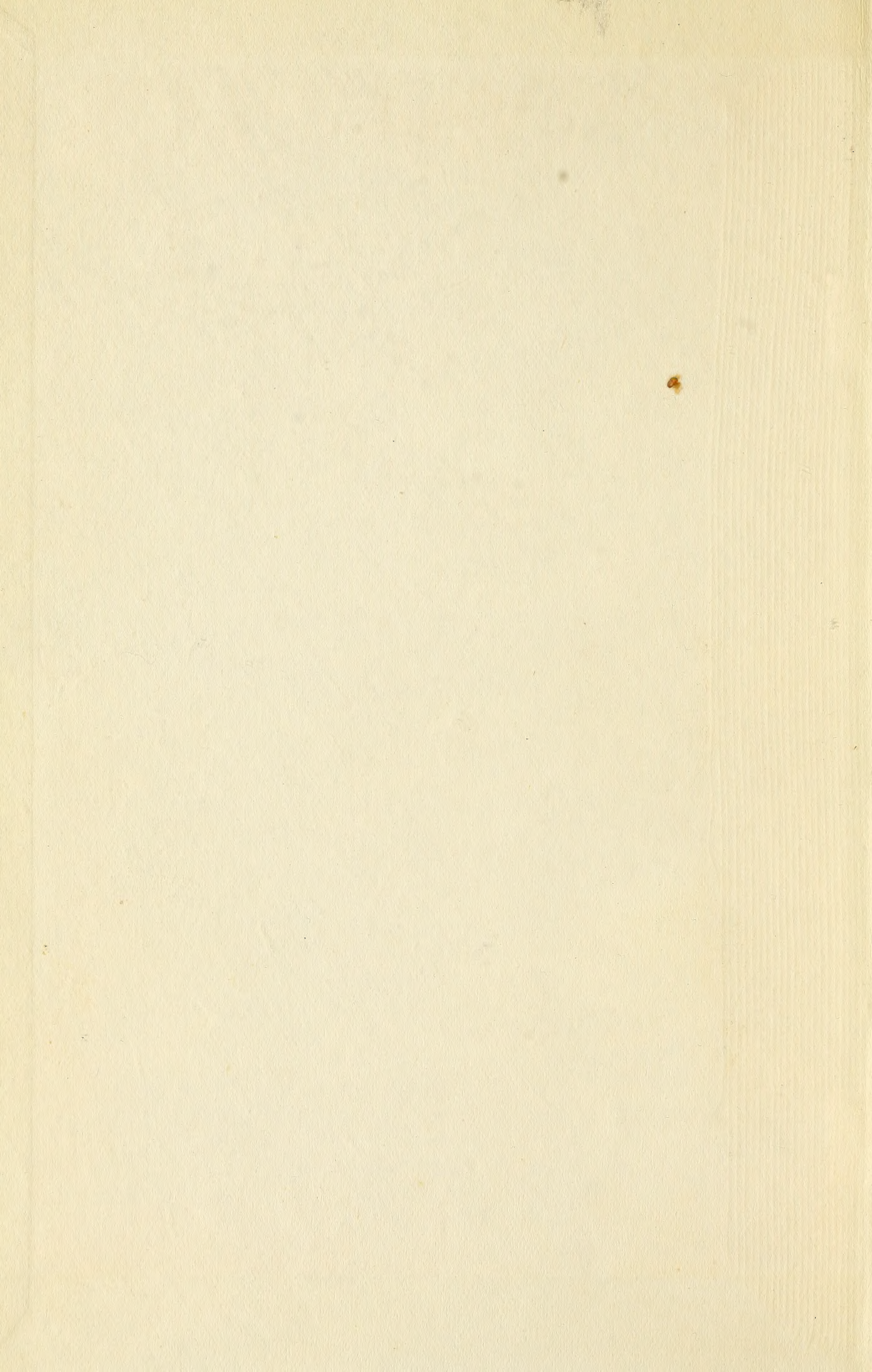


GOD'S BLACK
DIAMONDS

W. J. WARD





CONGREGATION AT EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE IN WEST AFRICA.

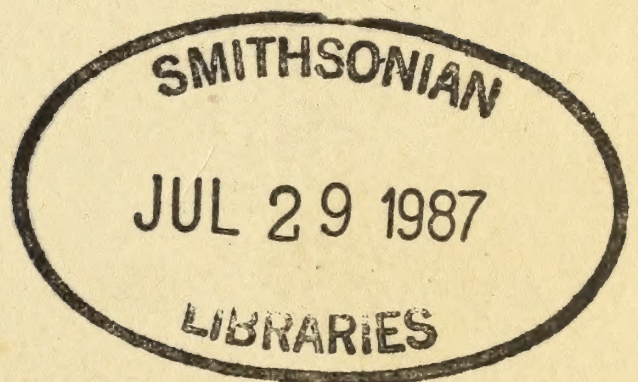
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God's Black Diamonds.

Chats with Boys and Girls about their Dusky Kinsfolk
in Africa.

BY THE

REV. W. J. WARD.



LONDON:

—
JOSEPH JOHNSON,
HOLBORN HALL, CLERKENWELL ROAD, E.C.1.

TO MY WIFE,
A FAITHFUL COLLEAGUE
AND TRUE MISSIONARY.

A WORD BY THE WAY.

1. *To my Young Friends.*

Do you know that it is just fifty years since the first brave Primitive Methodist missionaries set sail for Fernando Poo? The story of those early days has already been told. But very much has happened since, and it is about some of these later years I have tried to write. You have a perfect right to know, for without your help at the Missionary Anniversary our missionary income would be little more than half its present amount. I have written mostly about our Missions and people in Nigeria simply because I know these best, and I like to be sure of my facts. Similar things could be as fully written about Fernando Poo, the Ila Country and Aliwal North; that you can well believe from the references you will find in the following pages to life and work there. If you arrive at the conclusion that there are no adventures and triumphs to compare with those of missionary Crusaders, then I shall have accomplished my first and main purpose.

2. *To all Others Whom it may Concern.*

During my term as Young People's Missionary Secretary I have rejoiced in many tokens of increasing interest in Missions. Queries come along seeking information of a suitable kind to pass on to

A WORD BY THE WAY.

the scholars in our Sunday Schools; of a distinctly Primitive Methodist sort, there is some lack. One ventures to hope that the following pages will in some measure lessen the deficiency.

My thanks are due to the Revs. E. E. Pritchard* and J. S. Waltham Stanwell for the accompanying photographs.

W. J. WARD.

* Mr. Pritchard reserves the copyright of the photos he has so kindly supplied.

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MRS. EDWIN SMITH AND HER SEWING CLASS.

Not so Black as he is Painted.

IN the year 1902 I took a journey down the coast of Africa, from Nigeria to the Congo and back. On the return journey we called at several places for cargo and passengers homeward bound. At Cape Lopez a man called Professor Garner came on board. He said he was returning home to America. We soon got acquainted, and I discovered that he had, amongst his luggage, an iron cage. This was really the most important part of his outfit. He told me that he used to live for days in the bush—*inside* this cage. First of all, he fixed it securely amongst the branches of a strong tree, stepped inside, locked the door, and waited until monkeys of all kinds came round him full of curiosity and chatter. In this way he claimed he could study their ways and learn their speech. How far he succeeded he never told me, but simply said that he intended to put it all into a book. Shall I tell you how I felt? Why, just this! If it was worth while for Professor Garner to come all the way from the United States on an errand like that, it was much better worth while for the missionary to leave home and friends to get to know and help his African brothers and sisters. When I talked with the professor—and he was a good talker—I could not forget what a greater man than he or I

once said : " The proper study of man is the study of mankind." Every missionary soon finds out that before he can help the African he must try to understand him. And this takes time, patience, and, above all, common-sense. Travellers who pass through a country, especially if it takes them months to do it, think they know the people, but it really takes YEARS to get to know them through and through. When I sailed for Africa twenty years ago, several traders pitied me because I was leaving home and friends to live in an unhealthy climate to convert NIGGERS ! " Ugh ! " said they, " they are little better than monkeys." Living amongst them, trading with them, they ought to have known better, but you see they would not take the trouble. An Efik chief said to me one day, " Consul (Government) man he come for we country to get on and become big man too much ; trader man he come to make plenty money and then go home and spend it ; but God-palaver man (the missionary) he come not to make big name or big money, but to help us to be good and help we country." And because this is true of the missionary—and the natives know it to be true—he gets to know the people as no one else does. They come to trust him as a friend, and the false impressions, which their habits and customs create, pass away.

Let me mention several things I found out. The Efiks are amongst the kindest people I have ever met. When I was very sick, they counted nothing a trouble if they could help Mrs. Ward by getting me to a British doctor. When I made river trips, and called at their towns, they enquired not

only if I was "idem-usun" (well and strong), but if I was hungry, and would offer me food and drink.

And then how religious they are! They never build a house without building, first of all, an altar at which they can worship and offer sacrifice. Some people would tell you that their religion just suits them, and therefore they need no other. So it seems at first. But when you get to know them properly, you find their hearts are not satisfied, for they feel they sit in the darkness. The Word of the Lord Jesus, however, brings them light and makes them to do what they never thought of doing before, namely, singing for very joy the praises of the Great Abasi (God).

Light and Darkness.

A FEW years ago two gentlemen were sent to pay a special visit to our missions in Nigeria and Fernando Poo. In this country the people spoke of them as the "deputation"; among the Africans they were described as "the great white chiefs." It took them just about three weeks to reach Calabar, where the missionary and the mission-boat took charge of them and conveyed them to Oron. From Calabar to Oron is a boat journey taking four hours to accomplish, and during that time the darkness of the African night came upon them. All were tired before the beach was reached, so much so that one of the visitors from the homeland refused to wait until the cargo was landed and everything put away under lock and key in the boat house. He said that he would go up the hill to the mission forthwith. Led by a small boy he started, but did not get very far before something happened. The black ants were on the march—thousands of them—and were crossing the road which led up the hill in their usual orderly fashion. In the dense darkness the deputation knew nothing of this, and managed to put his foot right amongst them. Some ants, of course, gave up the ghost right away, but others, more fortunate, found themselves *on* the white chief's boot, not *under* it. They did not stay there, but ran up his leg and sampled both his flesh and

blood. The first thing he asked for when he reached the mission was—deliverance from his tormentors! Never again during the whole of this stay was a night journey taken without a friendly light.

The experience of that deputation reminds me of another incident caused in the same way. Very early one morning, just before daybreak, one of our missionaries was awakened out of his heavy sleep by loud knocking at his back door. When he went out he found three natives earnestly desiring his help. The story they told was something like this. Eager to obtain work at a town not far from Oron, they had left their homes some miles away and walked on through the day and far into the night. Being without a light, one of them, all unawares, trod upon a snake coiled up on the road. Quick as a lightning flash the snake hit back, biting the unfortunate traveller on the leg. Hence their appeal for the missionary's medicine to kill the pain and heal the wound.

The Psalmist lived in a country something like Africa, where travelling after sunset without a light was both foolish and dangerous; and surely this was at the back of his mind when he wrote: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Only, of course, he was thinking of another kind of darkness as well—the darkness that falls upon men and women on life's journey. Blacker still is the darkness that covers the people who live in heathen lands without any knowledge of God or His great love-gift, Jesus Christ. If I had room to tell you I could relate to you case after case which proves that without the light of God's Word

and His Son, who is the Light of the World, very many painful experiences befall the people—far worse than the bite of black ants or snakes. Nearly all the cruelties they inflict upon one another arise out of the fact that they live in the dark without God's light which you and I enjoy. Very seldom are they the result of delighting in cruelty. The missionary is, to the African, the light-bringer, and after preaching and teaching God's Word in Jesus Christ, the poor heathen discovers he has a lamp unto his feet and a light upon all his way, and is led to rejoice with exceeding joy. Cruel practices gradually cease, and life becomes brighter and better in every way. Surely there is only one answer to the question of the following lines :

“ Can we whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Can we to men benighted
The Lamp of Life deny? ”

And that is—“ NO.”

Held in Bondage.

WHEN I first landed in West Africa, I had to alter my ideas about many things. For example, I had always believed that where the Union Jack floated every man was free, but I discovered that in one British Protectorate, at any rate, slavery prevailed. It gave me a shock, I can tell you. I'm not sure I have got quite over it yet. In all fairness, I ought to add that the British authorities have done a good deal towards scotching it. They have stopped any further trading (buying and selling) in slaves. And to do that much, they had to wage war against the Aros—a people that lived on the profits of the slave traffic. They have also changed some of the harsh conditions of slavery. But when all is said and done, slavery remains a horrible thing. The only way to really improve it, is to improve it out of existence. Until you get away from the sea-coast, right into the bush, and live amongst the people, as one of themselves, you cannot form a true idea of the wretchedness and cruelty slavery inflicts. There are some things I know that I simply dare not put into print; not because I fear the consequences, but they are too horrible for decent folks to read. I stood one day on the beach at Jamestown looking out across the big water. I liked to do this, now and again, as it gave me the chance to see British steamers passing up to Calabar, and made me feel not quite so lonely and shut in. On this particular occasion there was no steamer in sight; simply a number of

canoes. One of these arrested my attention. It was making for Jamestown, and there were in it three people: one paddling at the prow, another steering at the stern, and the third huddled up in the middle. It was the crouching position of this third man that made me know something unusual was afoot. So I waited until they reached the shore. I found, then, that the crouching native was bound hand and foot, and had been brought miles in that position with a hot sun beating down upon him for hours together. With great difficulty I got him liberated and allowed to sit in the shade, whilst the other two went to King James Egbo Basseyy to complain about him and ask for redress. It turned out, that this poor fellow was their slave. They had paid 20,000 wires for him—£12 10s. od. in our money—and were disappointed, not because he was either insolent or lazy, but because he was homesick and unsettled, and they feared he would become sick and mayhap die! A slave-boy was one day sent by his master on an errand. Instead of going straight there and back he played on the road and was away a long time. His master worked himself up into a towering rage because of the delay, so that when the boy returned he struck him with a pole across the head and laid it open. Several people rebuked the man, saying the punishment was far too severe, and he might easily have killed the lad. How do you think he answered them? “If I had killed him, it’s nothing to do with you. He is my slave to do as I like with.” In our day-school at Jamestown we had a very nice girl-slave as one of our scholars. Her mistress was the head wife of King James Egbo Basseyy, and a

very enlightened woman. That is why Jane Asuquo—the slave-girl—was allowed to “learn book.” Jane became interested in good things, and her heart turned unto the Lord. Just when it seemed likely that she would become a baptised Christian and a member of our little Church, she suddenly disappeared. The King had demanded her from her mistress, the Queen, as he wanted to make her one of his wives. The Queen pleaded; Jane cried as if her heart would break; the members of the Church interviewed his royal highness; and a Christian young fellow said he was willing to marry her, Christian fashion; but all was vain and fruitless. The King was wroth that any bother should have been made at all. Jane Asuquo was only a slave to him, and her feelings and rights simply didn’t count! Ndo Mokidem and his wife were both Christian slaves. They left their master’s farm to attend a missionary meeting, but took good care to start work earlier for several mornings in succession to make good the time lost. Their master was angry that they should even think of allowing God’s claims to compete with his, so he took out a summons against them in a native court belonging to a town some miles away. They were arrested at the farm, taken to be tried at this distant place, and sentenced to six months’ imprisonment! Verily the tender mercies of slavery are cruel. The only ray of hope for these dark-skinned sons and daughters of Africa, now in bondage, lies in the spread of the Gospel, which slowly but surely brings equal rights and liberty to all. Christ is coming to Africa to break oppression, and set the captives free.

Gripped as in a Vice.

TURN up your dictionary and see what it has to say about the word "Vice." You will find it to be one of those English words which can have two or more meanings. When you link it up, however, with the word grip or gripped, all doubt vanishes as to what I mean; the process of identification is complete. At once, you have the picture of joiner or blacksmith putting either a piece of wood or a piece of iron into its mouth, and then screwing it up until it is so tightly shut that the wood or iron cannot possibly budge a fraction of an inch. When I think of the power that certain things have over the Efik people, I find myself saying, "Gripped as in a vice." Take the power of superstition, for example. I know there are superstitious people in this country who never feel sure of the future unless they nail a rusty horseshoe on the wall or barn-door; who never look at the new moon except through an handkerchief; who would never sit with twelve others at a table, and who—if they never got married at all—would refuse to be made husband or wife on a Friday. Of course it is very silly and all the rest of it, but superstition yields a more tragic and deadly harvest in Africa. It is very largely responsible for the terrible power of Ju-ju everywhere. Of its marvellous hold upon the people let me give an extraordinary example. The second chief of Arsiboug

Town was called Asuquo. He was a superior specimen of the type—in many things intelligent and in palaver procedure very skilful. Once when Egbo play had been indulged in, and dancing and drinking had accompanied it to a liberal extent, Asuquo found himself too tired, etc., to sleep properly, but just in prime form to show irritation and make somebody bear the brunt of it. In between his brief snatches of sleep, he was annoyed by the repeated coughing bouts of one of his boy-slaves. Shortly after daybreak he summoned the offender to his presence and sternly demanded of him what he had done to offend Ju-ju. It was of no avail for the boy to say he had not done anything. The cough was there—a plain proof to Asuquo that Ju-ju had tapped the boy's breast bone in his sleep, as a punishment for doing wrong. The tap had caused the cough, hence Asuquo's charge. The boy stuck to his tale and refused to be frightened into saying he had done something he hadn't. Asuquo was equally confident he had, so he took two leaves plucked from a bush and threw them in the air like gamblers throw coins, and declared that Ju-ju would make them both come the same way up, and thus prove the slave-boy a liar! Though he threw the leaves a number of times and coaxed Ju-ju to help him by offering sacrifices of living things, it was a long time before he managed to do the trick. And *when* he did it, he simply and triumphantly declared: "There I was sure my (Asuquo's) story was right," and ordered the boy to be punished! The customs of their ancestors has a like grip upon them. They appeal—through worship—to their ancestors and to manifest the same spirit and sup-

port their customs, hoary with age, is one of the greatest duties and glories of an Efik man or woman. The establishment of the Girls' Training Institute faced this difficulty for quite a long time. The old women—the "grannies" as someone called them—were quite opposed to it and its object. This was their argument: the girls of to-day will be the women and mothers of to-morrow. If they learn "book" and follow mission fashions they will turn their backs upon the customs and fashions of their fathers. And that will never do. Held fast in the grip of ignorance, and therefore a prey to many needless fears, the bush-heathen are to be greatly pitied. Can you imagine what it means to believe that no one dies a natural death unless he is very old? It works out like this in the Oron country. When a young person dies they never think of blaming the fever or pneumonia or small-pox; they hold that the disaster has come about through poison being placed in the food, or in the ground over which the deceased has walked, or else somebody has employed witchcraft, or "the evil eye." To bottom the mischief and discover the guilty party, the services of the witch-doctor are sought, and suspicion, fear, cruel suffering, and death soon follow. The only way to banish superstition and ignorance, and destroy the power of evil customs is to let in the light of knowledge—knowledge of the world in which we live, and knowledge of Jesus Christ, which makes folks wise unto salvation. And the best method to accomplish this lies in training the black boys and girls in far-away Mangrove-land.



NIGERIAN BOYS AT PLAY.



SEE-SAW IN WEST AFRICA.

Ju-jus.

SOME years back, our Mission did a "flit" from the Aqua Effy river district to Oron. It was a toilsome and weary process, requiring both patience and skill. But the missionaries came through the trying ordeal famously. An outstanding proof of it is furnished by the splendid site they chose for the present Oron Mission Station. For view, healthiness, and lots of other desirable things in West Africa, it cannot be beaten. But when the ground was first chosen, the natives thought the missionaries were either brave or mad! For was it not Ju-ju ground? To trespass upon the preserves of Ju-ju was something far more serious than poaching. When the mission house was built who would be able to live in it? Outraged and offended Ju-ju would surely destroy all such adventurers. So the folks of the district confidently expected, and when time proved them wrong, then they talked about "white man's medicine" being stronger than Ju-ju. Later on, under that very mission house I was privileged to see nearly a canoe-load of Ju-jus piled together. They had been brought there by the people of Atabong. Since they had invited our missionary to enter their town and open a mission school, they felt it was time they did away with the old fashions, etc. They had no desire to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. Religion, to them, was no playing matter. They felt they could not be heathen and Christian at one and the same time, so all Ju-jus had to go. But where? Who dare destroy them? What a fix they were in until the happy thought seized them to take them all to

Rev. R. Banham and let him dispose of them as seemed best to him. They were made into a great bonfire in the end, and though some natives feared and trembled, nothing serious happened by way of Ju-ju reprisals. To estimate what a big wrench and a brave act it was for these Atabong people so to do, requires some knowledge of the place and power of Ju-ju in African life. To tell the whole story would fill a big book. As that is impossible, let me give one or two examples instead. Supposing a man is busy at his farm. The yams are peeping through the ground and he requires sticks eight to ten feet long to support them as they grow. Away he goes to some suitable spot in the forest and cuts down as many as he thinks he will eventually require. He cannot possibly carry them all home at once. What must he do? He searches until he has found the large dried pod of a special fruit, places that on the heap of sticks he has for the time being to leave behind, and goes home with the remainder on his head, tied in a bundle. Though the African is not very particular about taking what does not belong to him, the owner of the sticks knows that his property is as safe as if it were in a shed under lock and key. The pod is a guarantee of the protecting power of Ju-ju, and no one dare meddle with even one stick. I've seen fresh eggs dropped at the juncture of two paths as an offering to Ju-ju, and no one would either touch them or take them away. They stayed there until they rotted and perished utterly. Hard by every town there are little mud houses, roofed in with palm-mats and curtained in the front by fringes of dried grass. These are Ju-ju houses,

and inside you find idols and charms and Ju-jus of all sorts. To them the people repair when they are in difficulty, trouble, or sorrow, and there they offer sacrifice in kind and value, according to the boon they seek. I was greatly disturbed one day by an ear-piercing scream of a man who was running with his sick child over his shoulder along the path leading to one of these places. He went to ask Ju-ju to save his child from dying, and offered sacrifices in gin and other things to the value of one pound. Poor fellow! When he came back, he was disconsolate because he thought he had gone too late. His dead boy was in his arms. From these examples you can form some idea of what a very big step it is for a man or a town to "break" with Ju-ju. Yet that is happening all over our Nigerian mission field. A tall young Bende man surrendered a very powerful Ju-ju—one which was his father's before him—to the Rev. F. W. Dodds, because he wanted to become a Christian. This Ju-ju was kept under lock and key, and consisted of a raised mound eighteen inches high, loaded with chains and trinkets and decorated with feathers. It was a tremendous sacrifice for a young man—and a chief's son at that—to make. But Njoku was equal to the task. The head of another town went a step further even than Njoku, since he burnt all the Ju-jus first, and then sent to the Missionary telling him what he had done, and begging for a Church in his town, saying, "I want the Gospel to do in my town as it has done in other towns." Thus through the overthrow of Ju-ju the day of deliverance for Afric's sons and daughters draws rapidly near.

The Deadly Fire-Water.

USUALLY we think of fire and water as bitter enemies of each other. What puts out a fire so quickly as water, and what causes water to evaporate like fire? Then how can fire and water come together in liquid form and be contained in a black, square-faced bottle, or in a much larger vessel called a demi-john? If I cannot explain how it is managed, I can at least give a fearless testimony that it is done, and the product is labelled "gin" or "rum." To distinguish it from other fiery liquids sold under these names amongst white people, it is called *trade gin* or *trade rum*. Of all the vile stuff, in composition and in effect, this fire-water will take a lot of beating. One of the best friends the Nigerian natives ever had cursed it so much that she spoke of it as the "devil's soup." After seeing the mischief and havoc it works, I am not surprised. Poverty, ill-health, quarrels, unhappiness, suffering and murder are just a few on the black list of charges that can be levelled against it. I've seen so much of its terrible ravages that, on one occasion when its horrible work roused me to the pitch of fiery and righteous indignation, I vowed a vow that, God helping me, I would smite the horrible thing with heavy blows every time I got the chance. One of the most shameless acts of trade was repeatedly practised in a trading factory not very far from Oron. What do you think? The trader—not a Britisher by-the-by—kept a barrel of fire-water on tap, and when people came in from the bush districts bringing native produce to sell he turned on the tap

and gave them "tots" of fire-water as a present! The trouble is, that through a series of years, Great Britain and Germany has poured into Southern Nigeria thousands of cases and casks annually, so that the drinking of this horrible stuff has become part and parcel of the social habits and customs of the people. At weddings, funerals, palavers, play, Egbo, house-building times, and I know not when else, gin and rum is bought and consumed. It is one of the strongest enemies the missionary has to deal with. When about eleven days out on my first trip to the Coast, the officers and crew began to get the hatches opened with a view to discharging some cargo as soon as the first port was reached. My attention was invited to the *kind* of cargo, packed up in a certain form and size of case. I was then informed that they were cases of gin and rum! Said my instructor: "We have four missionaries on board to win the heathen for Christ, but we have hundreds of bottles of the stuff that does sure and certain work for the devil. What chance have you?" I felt the force of what he said THEN, but I lived to feel it MORE and MORE the longer I sojourned in their midst. The natives themselves feel it to be a bane and curse. One afternoon I thought Mrs. Ward and I might have a walk for about an hour or so whilst tea was being got ready. Something led us to change our ordinary route for once, and we went through the neighbouring village of Esuk Oron, and eventually reached the beach. And this is one of the sights we saw. In a little stockade arrangement—in shape like a triangle—there was a native altar and Ju-ju placed at the arrow end, and before it stood

three men, one evidently in custody. They were going through an elaborate native ceremony, which by listening attentively I discovered was the Ju-ju way of taking the temperance pledge. It turned out that the culprit—a slave—was too fond of gin and rum, and had behaved very unseemly several times until his masters thought the situation called for drastic measures. So they brought him to this altar, and before Ju-ju made him take the most solemn and binding oath they knew—"biam." Whether this way of securing total abstainers was a success I cannot say, as I did not know any of the men personally. But it does show that even the heathen recognise its cursed power, and are compelled to take stern measures every now and then to deal with it. A District Commissioner (a British official) once told our missionaries that he had no trouble whatever with mission towns. We felt it a splendid tribute to the success of our work. The District Commissioner partly accounted for the good behaviour of such towns by the way the trade in gin and rum was tackled by our Churches. The first funeral I conducted in Jamestown was that of an intelligent and well-educated native from Sierra Leone. He died raving mad—a danger to himself and a peril to the community—through fondness for gin and rum. One of the most striking testimonies of its curse came to me when on my way to take the weekly open-air preaching service at Ibaka. The latter place was about a mile from Jamestown, and was worked from there. Accompanied by my interpreter, and some of the house-boys, we approached the entrance to the town and found in the palaver-shed a number of drunken men sprawling

all over the mud floor, and in one corner a heap of black, square-faced, empty gin bottles. There was only one man not too far gone for speech. To him I expressed great regret that they should be so foolish. With a leer, he replied, "White man count gin a good thing, or why he done bring him for we country? All white man be brothers, why talk I with another mouth" (in another fashion)? I explained why, and he was satisfied. Just then a goat came running by, and at once I said: "Suppose I catch them goat and give him gin, what thing them goat go do?" He signified that the goat's head would go round and round; it would be drunk. "Quite right," I replied, "but let two days, three days pass, and I try make them goat drink gin again, what thing them goat go do?" Like a flash he replied, "Them goat no fit to agree." Then came the chance for which I had been waiting, and I asked: "Does goat get sense past man?" He recognised he was cornered, and then added very pathetically: "O etubom (master), it be no use to talk this word to we now. We done drink gin long time too much. Suppose we no drink again, some big fire inside will humbug we all the time plenty too much; but I beg you, massa, talk this word to our boys and girls, and make them no be fool all same as their fathers." What he begged us to do, we have done from the beginning. And more! Every member of the Primitive Methodist Church in Africa is a total abstainer, and is also pledged not to trade in it in any way. Believe me, a drink-freed Africa would soon be a Christ-controlled Africa. Do your best to help us abolish the gin and the rum!

“Follow Your Leader.”

ISN'T that the name of a game you sometimes play? At any rate we did, when I went to school. And if—as sometimes happened—our leader in the game was full of daring and tricks he gave us a hard time of it, and our clothes suffered as well as our hands. The West African children have their own set of games, but I don't know of one which quite matches this English one. But if not in play, then in real earnest they will do almost anything to try and follow their leader. They are born copyists. Their eagerness to imitate reminds me of the old fable of the mother-crab who chided her offspring and said: “Walk straight, my dear.” “You go first and show me the way,” came the reply as quick as a flash of lightning. All the Nigerians believe in the creed of the junior crab. In the early days of the Mission, there were several who were quite ready to throw off heathen customs and discard heathen practices that were wrong, and dedicate their lives to Jesus Christ, but they didn't. They opened their minds to me and told me they strongly desired to serve Jesus Christ “good fashion,” but ———. What do you think the trouble was? They felt it would never do to take the lead from their “Ete,” or leader. As soon as he was ready to become Christian they would gladly follow, but not before. That is one of the big difficulties the missionaries are up against all

the time. Their bent for copying the one “who is big man too much” produces amusing consequences, as well as disappointing ones. Before the missionary has been with them many years, and therefore before they properly understand his purpose in coming to live and work amongst them, they copy his dress, and habits, and tricks of speech with laughable results. One missionary when he took long journeys carried his watch in his leather belt for convenience. Some time afterwards one of his workers came on a long journey to see him, and as he had no watch he carried an *alarum clock* fastened to his belt. He felt he must follow—as nearly as he could—his leader. How the news got out that I have some artificial teeth I can hardly tell you, but I have shrewd suspicions. This got noised abroad without me knowing anything about it, until one day an important chief from the neighbouring town of Eyo Abassey walked four miles to see me. When I had made him feel a welcome visitor, we talked upon a variety of subjects until at last he got to business. Then he began by assuring me he was my friend, had been from the beginning, and would be right on to the end. He hoped, and ventured to express this hope, that I also was his friend in a similar way. When I satisfied him on the point, he brought forth the story he had heard that I was such a wonderful man I possessed some teeth I could take out of my mouth and put in again at my pleasure; sleep with them, or without them, just as I chose. Was such a story a true one? If so, it was too wonderful for a bush man to believe unless he saw me take them out and put them back with his very own eyes! Would I

favour him? I did it, and his eyes nearly left his head in his astonishment; and his arms shot up as though he was going to say "Kamerad!" When he pulled himself together he asked me questions about the price. At last, he reached the climax by asking me to accept from him the sum I had named and get him a set just like mine from England, so that he could be like his leader and friend! One of the missionary's great aims is to seek to turn the native's keen desire to copy to the best account. The mission-farm is made a model for the observant eyes and imitative spirits round about, with great gain in produce, etc., at harvest time. The mission-house, when built of native material, has in it many improvements, and produces better dwellings in the town "by slow degrees and more and more" to the benefit of all concerned. Mindful above all things of the power of a life, the missionary sets a watch not only upon his speech, but is circumspect in everything lest he should hinder the cause of Christ. To the native the missionary is what they styled John Cooper in another land—JESUS CHRIST'S MAN!

First Things First.

A BOOK on my shelves which I like to take down and read sometimes is called by the queer name of "Mountains in the Mist." It was written by one of God's good men who lives neither in England nor Africa, but right at the other side of the world. In one part of that book he reminds his readers of a story told by Isaiah about a bushman who made a forest clearing. With the big tree he had felled he decided *first* of all to cook his food, **THEN** to replenish the fire and make himself warm and comfortable, and lastly, with *what was left*, to carve an idol. Food, comfort, religion, that was the order in which he placed them. Was he right? The Bible says not. The word of Jesus is very plain. "Seek ye **FIRST** the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things shall be added unto you." Where the Syrian backwoodsman of Isaiah's story failed, the Efik bushman succeeds. Before he saw the missionary, or heard the words of Christ, he put "first things first." As far as he knew how, he put religion in the first place. Shall I tell you how I discovered it? I had noticed a number of things from time to time which made me feel certain that he placed a very high value upon his religion, but one day I saw something that told me everything, so to speak. A married man had determined to live in a house, or compound, of his own. He was tired of sharing

quarters with other families. Besides he felt important enough, and well enough off too, to go off on his own. Having got the sanction of the head chief, or "Ete," for a particular site of ground, it had been marked out with stakes and bush-cord with due native ceremony, and then there transpired, just as I got on the scene, the thing that linked up and explained so many other things. It was simply this. Instead of beginning to erect his walls or digging a pit to provide him with mud for the walls, he turned his attention first of all to the erection of an *altar*! Turn back to the story in Genesis, and you will find that is precisely what Abraham used to do. When he decided to settle in a place for a while, he first of all built an altar unto the Lord. Fancy an Efik heathen being like Abraham in this matter! And yet it is so. When the house was finished, you could see wooden idols which belonged to his grandfather or great-grandfather, propped up against the wall outside. Within—if you knew where to look—you could find two altars, one called Isu Abasi (Face of God), and another which he named Isu Ekpe (Face of Evil). At both of these he offers sacrifices! If he takes an important journey, he makes gifts and says his prayers for help and guidance. If anything unusual appears in the sky, or happens with respect to the weather, he seeks a religious explanation. If in his journeys through the forest, he comes across a tree unusual in size and shape, he at once jumps to the conclusion that some god or spirit has chosen and marked it off for his own special use. He has only one place for religion, and that is its proper one—namely, *first* place. When the

inhabitants of a town about ten miles away from Jamestown Mission got to hear what the missionary was teaching about Abasi Ibum—Jehovah God—and that it was the right thing to rest from all labour and trade on the first day of every week, they decided to do the latter, hoping that Abasi Ibum would note their willingness to do all they knew about His commands, and take pity on them and send someone to teach them, enlightening them in their ignorance and satisfying their hearts with God's Truth. If, and when, you should be tempted to hide your belief in God, or your real devotion to Him and His service, remember the heathen bushman, who never hides his religion or apologises for it, or makes it play "second fiddle"; but quite naturally gives it pride of place, believing that *first* things should always come first.

Curiosity.

WHEN quite a youth I paid a visit to a professor to have "my bumps read." He put his hands on different parts of my head, felt here and there, measured it with a tape, and I know not what else, and at last wrote down his conclusions in a book, which I brought away with me. In it he said many things. Amongst others—that I was inquisitive, or full of curiosity. It was quite true, and I hope is so still. If you turn to your dictionary you will find there is really nothing to be ashamed about in being curious, for it only means you are anxious to learn. Judging by *my* experience, it does not require a professor to discover that the African is as full of curiosity as "an egg is full of meat." And it stands to the negro's credit that he is so anxious to know things. I want to tell you some amusing instances of his inquisitiveness and **SOME**—not amusing. When I lived at Jamestown, quite a number of mission boys dwelt in the mission grounds. They were there for special training. On Saturdays it fell to their lot during the morning to wash their own clothes, and in the afternoon they left them in the sun to dry whilst they went for a walk, or paid a visit to some of their friends. As Mrs. Ward and I took a stroll at the same time they had each to take turn in remaining behind to mind the house. One Saturday we returned from

our walk and could find nowhere the boy who had been left in charge. At last I looked in at the dormitory downstairs, and sure enough, behind the door, was the object of our search. On the floor he had our one and only clock in pieces, and when asked what he was about, replied: "Master, I take them clock to pieces to find where its TICK comes from." Rather hard lines for the missionary, don't you think, seeing that the nearest shop where another could be got was from twenty to thirty miles away? In his very interesting book, "A Missionary Pathfinder in South Central Africa," the Rev. W. Chapman tells how after much labour, hard thinking, and contriving, he at last managed to fix up a small sawmill, so that the trees felled in the forest could be quickly and more easily cut into the proper lengths for building purposes. When it got to work, the fame of it spread for miles around. From far and near people came to see it. One native took a long journey to prove the truth of what he had heard, and, when he saw it, he just burned with curiosity to know how the circular blade cut the hard wood so easily. To find out, he put his finger by it whilst in motion, and before he could say "Oh, dear!" his finger end had fallen into the saw-pit. So astonished, indeed afraid, was he that he ran and ran until he was out of sight, and much further even than that, for he never came back again. But, alas! the curiosity of the African does not always show itself in such harmless ways. Do you know that the African believes that his countryman is murdered unless he dies of old age? And when death occurs otherwise, they use many queer and dreadful

methods to find out who is the murderer. In the Okoyong country, if a husband dies his wives have to step out one by one, when the head of a fowl is cut off, and the judges find them innocent or guilty according to the way the body of the fowl falls. When it falls the wrong way the accused wife is declared guilty and put to death straightway. Another method, and one that is very popular, is to take a little poisonous bean called "esere," crush it, put it into water, and then make all the suspected people drink it. If they die of poison it is quite all right, for the natives argue that the bean could not have harmed them had they been innocent. At a place called Ebukhu the Rev. N. Boocock and I paid the first missionary visit the people had ever had. We were well received, and, after we had told them about God and His love, they said our word was a good word, and they would like a teacher, as they were anxious to know more. Thus their curiosity made an opening for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL AFRICAN DANDY, SHOWING WONDERFUL HAIR-CONE.

A Peaceful Invasion.

YOU must have heard the grown-ups talk about invasion during the Great War. Some feared lest one day, quite suddenly, this island home of ours might be invaded by an army that was *not* on a peaceful errand. And so men, who were not in the ranks of the Army or Navy, spent many hours drilling and learning to shoot in order to defend their country should such an invasion ever be attempted.

Now the missionary is an invader. He goes to other lands, and settles down amongst strange peoples, often—indeed, mostly—without being invited. But he is a *peaceful* invader. His gospel is not the gospel of *force*, but the gospel of LOVE. He arrives without rifle, sword, or soldier, armed only with the protection of God and faith in the power of the message he carries. The result is, he makes few enemies and many friends.

Some of my most interesting memories of missionary life belong to this kind of work. When the Rev. Robert Banham and I got to know for certain that Archibong Town—where Mr. Banham lived—was going to pass into the hands of the Germans, we told the townspeople the news. Most of them said they would not stay if the Germans came. We therefore decided the Mission would have to move too. So Mr. Banham and I got the boat ready, and started off one night on a long

river journey to reach a place we had often talked about. Some of the Archibong people went with us in their canoes. During the night it came on to rain very hard. In the pitch darkness our boat ran ashore on a sandbank, and we had to change to one of the canoes. We arrived at daybreak, and after getting our breakfast in a fashion something like our soldier friends got theirs in the trenches, we went into the town, whose name we did not then really know.

Our first object was to find the "Ete," or head chief. He was not at home, but was expected any time. So we walked round the town, had a look at the land all round about, and then waited. By-and-bye the "Ete" arrived. As soon as all his family and friends had greeted him, we told him who we were, and what was our business. He listened very politely, and then asked the other chiefs gathered round him what they thought about our words, at the same time giving them his opinion.

After some argument amongst themselves, and two or three questions to make certain things better understood, they all with one voice declared they held the same opinion as their "Ete" (head chief). And that was this: Three times before had they had visits from missionaries asking them for admission into their town and district, and as many times had they refused. Now for a fourth time had come the same request—only this time from a different mission. Surely God was thinking about them, and knocking at the door of their town for admission. To keep the door shut any longer would be wrong, and would bring them "plenty trouble," so we

could begin our work whenever we chose. The native Christians who were with us then held "palaver" with the same chiefs. They told them about the Germans who were going to take possession of their town, adding, "Them German no love black man, he flog him too much." They also said that they had made their minds up to follow the mission wherever it settled, even though they lost their farms, for the Bread of Life was more important than yams and plantain and cassava—food for the body. Would they therefore sell them some land where they could build themselves houses and live amongst them peacefully as friends?

It was not settled so quickly, or easily, as I set it down, but in the end an agreement was reached, and Afaha Eduok (the native name of the town) has become a mission town, where the Sabbath is strictly kept, and the people delight to attend God's house. Only about a mile away stands the Oron Training Institute that every Sunday School and C.E. Society has heard so much about.

Where to Live.

THIS is a matter your fathers and mothers have to settle every now and then. By it I do not mean simply the house, or the street, but the town and district as well. It is a common saying amongst grown-ups, that a man must live where his work is. And if it can be managed, it is a very sensible thing to do. But during the War another question troubled many parents, and that was, where could they live to be safe from air raids and all risks of bombardment? I am afraid that the furniture van in some districts was, on that account, kept very busy.

Well, now, in the great Continent of Africa, where there are few, or none, of such war perils, the same question has been faced by tribes and chiefs and heads of families. Tribes have often decided the question by fighting. Some West African natives say that the people in the Oron country and Calabar district came from up-country. And they came down because they had to. They were driven by a strong foe to the mangrove swamps and creeks of the Cross River delta. I am given to understand that in the Yoruba Country the presence of the earth-worm on, and in, the land settles the question for the Yoruba chiefs as to where they and their people shall dwell. This is how they argue: "Where the worm is plentiful the soil is good. As we live by tilling the ground,

we shall live best where the soil is fertile." The general questions that settled matters in most of the parts where I have been, were: Is there good water? and, will we be near our fishing-grounds, or farms, or markets? as the case might be.

There were exceptions, of course. I say of course, because you never knew a rule without an exception, did you? I've found a town hidden away in the thick bush. So hidden, in fact, that it was possible to walk along a path not more than one hundred yards from it and never dream that a town was near. The location of such a town is explained by the belief that in such secrecy is to be found—SAFETY. Occasionally I came across a deserted village falling fast into ruins. Before the village was forsaken a sickness—such as small-pox—had raged there, and the people took it as a sign that "Ju-ju," or witches, disputed their right to live there, and fled. I am told that this very often happens with the Bubis up the mountain in Fernando Poo.

The missionaries who go to work in Africa have to discuss and settle the very same problem of where to live. At the very beginning of things the missionary cannot afford to be too particular. His first business is to "get his foot in." The Revs. N. Boocock and R. Banham lived in a dark room in a mud compound at Esuk Oron, and the Rev. W. Christie for weeks and months in mud houses by the wayside, in order to get a start. The Revs. H. Buckenham, A. Baldwin, F. Pickering, and W. Chapman did the same thing in South Central Africa, only for a very much longer time. But as soon as it can be done the missionary chooses a

place at which to live that will (1) bring him within reach of the greatest number of people, and (2) where the situation is best for health. Any changes which have taken place in the location of our African Missions are accounted for in this way. Either the people have moved on, or a more central place been found, or a healthier site has become available. And, when all is said and done, a healthy missionary can win more heathen to Jesus Christ than a dead, or dying, one.

Making a Start.

HOW to begin is often a puzzle to a missionary in a new town or country. A good start goes a long way towards making sure of a good finish. The first thing the Revs. F. Pickering and W. Chapman did when they got to Nkala was to go off at daybreak to shoot game that the people might have food to eat. Owing to the bad farming season and a plague amongst the cattle, the people were actually starving. But the missionary—whilst willing to help the people in every possible way—is keen on making an opportunity to tell the people about God and honouring the Sabbath day. Mr. Chapman tells us in his book that he had great difficulty in teaching the natives to know which day was Sunday. At last he got them to count on their fingers, beginning with the little finger on the left hand. When they started with the thumb on the right hand they knew they had come to the “leaving-off work-day,” and the next day was “Singing day,” or Sunday. What a job Mr. Chapman had to get his congregation to do the right thing during divine service! The Baila had never prayed as we do. To kneel down and shut your eyes in broad daylight seemed the funniest thing under the sun. After they had learned to do it, the Baila mothers made it awkward for a time, for they brought their babies with them on

their backs when they came to worship God. When they knelt with their heads hanging right down, the babies felt frightened and cried ever so loudly. I am reminded of the first service I held at a certain town in Nigeria. We—the people and the mission—had built a church, and in it the first Christian service was held. I got the boys from the Oron Training Institute to go with me, and we walked right round the town singing the praises of God in native language. The old chief opened the door at my request, and inside five minutes the church was so full there was no chance for late-comers. Some had brought seats with them, and those who had not had to sit on the floor. What a time it was! We had to teach them the hymns line by line, and, harder still, had to teach them the tune! There was no organ to lead the singing. With the Institute boys for a choir, we managed to pull through. When it came to the collection, I lost nearly all my congregation. They had scattered to their homes to get some money. We waited till they came back, received what they brought, and then finished in the usual way. The Rev. A. H. Richardson, at the end of his trek to the Udi Country, settled down for a time in a town called Ogwe. He held his first service with the chiefs of that place. They all sat together in a compound. He taught them, line by line, the words of a hymn, and then how to sing it. He explained he was going to talk with the Great Father in prayer, and asked them to close their eyes and bow their heads. They did so, all the time Mr. Richardson talked with God. And after he had told them the great Bible story, and finished off the service, they told

him they worshipped three gods, the sun, the river, and the earth, and were not prepared to change. Not a very encouraging start, was it? But in three or four months they talked in quite another fashion, and are very keen now to have a missionary live with them always, and teach them God's way of life.

Measuring the Missionary.

ONE of the first problems facing a pioneer missionary is that of making himself understood. For I want you to remember that whilst it is important that the missionary should understand the natives, it is not less so that the natives should come to understand him. Do you know that when our first missionaries went to the country of the Baila about the year 1893, the people could not understand them at all? They actually thought that—having done some wicked thing—they had been driven from their own land, or else, they had left their country to make themselves rich by making slaves of the Africans. A crowd of savages, armed to the teeth, went one day to Mr. Chapman's mission at Nambala. They filed up in silence on the mission grounds just about one hundred yards from his hut. There they stayed for several hours, talking together in low tones, until things looked very black indeed. Mr. Chapman could not ask them any questions, as he knew so little of their tongue and they knew none of his. All that he could do was to silently pray. When they departed in peace Mr. Chapman was still in ignorance as to why they came. I reckon those first ideas the Baila had about the missionaries had something to do with the visit, don't you? Be that as it may, one thing has been abundantly proved, it was not until the people began to really know our missionaries

that the work began to prosper. One of the most successful means of removing suspicions and distrust is the missionary's mastery of the native language. But that requires time. The first missionaries get no help from books, because there are none. There is nothing for it but to go about asking: "What's this? What's the name for that?" As though that were not enough, wrong answers are often given in order that the missionary might be landed into difficulties, and the people have some fun. Then it sometimes happens that two words which sound very much alike, have very different meanings. One of my missionary friends thought he was asking a mission youth how old he was. When the lad replied, with his hand to his body, "One," he knew there was a mistake somewhere. He found out that instead of employing the right word he had used one that sounded very like it, but which made his question to run: "How many stomachs have you got?" One of our missionaries in Central Africa had quite as awkward an experience. At evening prayers, with all the mission people about him, he asked God to give them good sleep that they might work well on the morrow. Unfortunately he said "boloko" instead of "boroko," and so the natives heard him ask for good *cow-dung* instead of *good sleep*. A very different thing, eh? Through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the natives are helped to understand the missionary. In what he preaches they find the explanation of his presence amongst them, as likewise his life and ways. It takes most missionaries a long time before they can preach and write the Gospel in native speech. Until then,

they have to depend upon the services of an interpreter, but this method is not always satisfactory. Mary Slessor once caught a Calabar interpreter telling the congregation not only what the preacher had said, but adding something of his own which was in flat contradiction to the teaching of the address. The subject was, "The rich man and Lazarus," and the interpreter told the people that—no matter what the preacher said—it was much better to be the rich man! I have sometimes heard it said that in England people read Christians through their lives rather than through their speech. Africans, particularly, do both. As soon as the Etubom or Moruti, as they call him, comes to live in their midst they not only listen to what he has to say, but they watch him very closely every day. They take stock of all he does and form their own conclusions. If his life proves their first opinions wrong, they change them and begin to look upon him as a friend. When Mr. Fell left Kanchindu in order to visit this country, the people who used to be suspicious of missionaries and thought hard and wicked things about them, gave him a splendid present just to show how much they admired and loved him. After years of patient waiting and hard work the people now know Mr. Fell and his colleagues, and the Gospel is given the chance of proving the power of God unto salvation.

“Sitting where the Folks Sit.”

THERE is an Old Testament story about a man of God who had a most important message to give to the people. He was not only anxious to deliver it, but to do it in the very best possible way. He felt that would only be possible when he knew more of the life, trials and sufferings of God's people. So he went to them of the captivity who lived by a river called Chebar and shared their life for a while. Ezekiel—for that was the prophet's name—describes his action, and how it made him feel, as follows: “I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished seven days.”

That example all missionaries seek to copy. Their great desire is to be one with the people in everything except their evil ways. This is far from easy, but it is always worth while. Some time back I was reading about Egerton R. Young, the apostle of Christ to the North American Indians, and came across an incident which shows what “sitting where the Red Indians sit” meant for him. He paid a visit to a very wild tribe amongst them, and as he went he was full of wonder as to how they would treat him. There was a pleasant surprise in store for him. They not only received him kindly, but arranged to hold a feast in his honour. This was intended as a mark of great

respect. At the feast the braves were made to sit on the ground in Indian fashion; that is, in the form of a half-circle. The big chief was at one end and Mr. Young was placed at the other end. A great haunch of venison was brought in and handed to the big chief. He took hold of it with both his hands, lifted it to his mouth, tore a big piece out of it with his teeth, and then passed it on to the one sitting next to him. He did exactly what his leader had done. As the venison kept coming nearer and nearer, Mr. Young felt he could never bring himself to eat some of what might be left. He knew that if he refused he would commit a very grave offence, and would be driven from them never to be regarded as their friend again. So he prayed to God for help, struggled with, and overcame, his feeling of sickness, and took a mouthful of red flesh from the bone when his turn came. It required a great effort on his part, but it was worth while for they looked upon him as a comrade, and listened very attentively to all he had to say about the Great God who ruled the universe and loved men.

James Chalmers, when he went amongst the cannibals of New Guinea, practised the same rule. The Papuans never shake hands when they meet; they rub their noses together. So, though they were very dirty, and not at all pleasant to come into contact with, Chalmers put aside all his dislike of dirt, etc., and rubbed noses with the chiefs as he greeted them.

In Nigeria in the early days of our work there, our missionaries were often the first white people to visit the people. Some towns were not very

gracious, but as a rule “the God-palaver” men were given a very hearty welcome. One favourite method of giving such a welcome was to prepare food for so acceptable a visitor. The dish of food was always the best according to their judgment of things, namely, palm-oil chop. Now I’m sure that if the missionary had seen the colour of the water in which the yams were washed, etc., and the condition of the hands of some who helped to prepare the food, and the kind of meat that was put in as a tit-bit, he would often have lost both his relish and appetite. Some of your missionaries have actually eaten dog and monkey. When making just a passing call at one of the Oron villages, fresh palm-wine* would be offered as a thirst-quencher. It was never wise to look at the colour of the glass, or to think about the bits floating about in the wine, or to dwell upon the fact that the man who offered you the drink, first of all drank some himself—though likely he needed washing very badly—just to show that it contained no poison, and was perfectly safe to drink. To accept the proffered drink was always worth while. Friendships and goodwill resulted, and mountains of distrust, and valleys of suspicion were levelled up and a way made for the Gospel and the King of the nations—Jesus Christ.

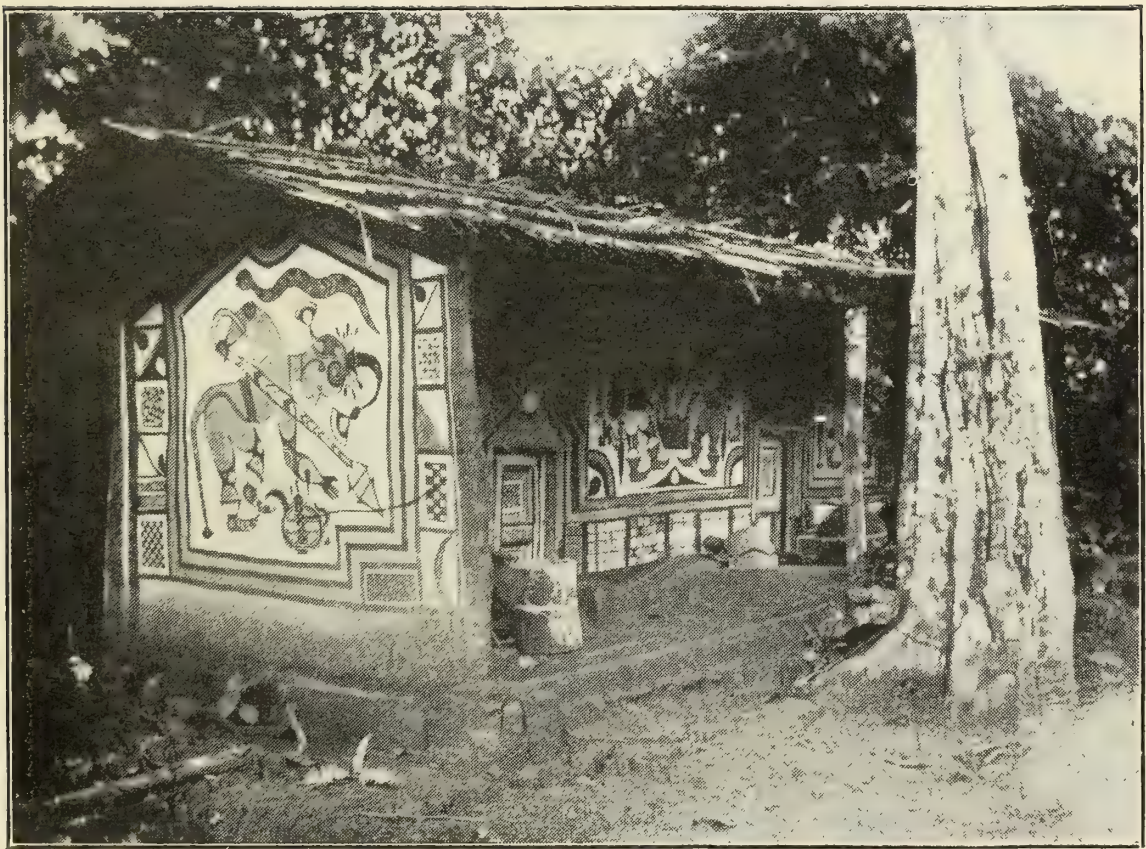
* Non-intoxicating.

“A-Hunting we will go.”

I ONCE heard of a man who said he did not believe in missionaries because they found time to go off shooting. His idea was that if their hearts were fully in their work they would have enough to do, without finding time to stalk big game. I believe there are many more who feel something like that when they see a photograph of a missionary standing with his rifle alongside a lion or an antelope he has shot. What I want you to see is that this is not fair to the missionary. To begin with—let us take the case of lion-shooting. In Central Africa this king of beasts abounds. Often he is not content with preying upon other creatures of the veldt or forest, but will seek to provide himself with human flesh for dinner. Some of you may remember that David Livingstone was attacked by one, and badly mauled. He carried the marks of its attack upon him to his dying day. When a hungry lion, or lions, come prowling about the buildings of a village, or town, seeking whom they may devour what ought a missionary to do? Let them do as they like? Or follow the tracks next morning and lay wait for it until he can shoot it? Again, what is a missionary to do when a man-eater enters the mission compound in search of food? Surely there is only one answer possible. A living missionary and a dead lion are very far better than a living lion and a dead missionary.



A STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE.



A MEMORIAL HOUSE NEAR ADADIA.

Then there is another side to the subject and one equally important, so I think. The Rev. W. Chapman, one of the bravest of missionaries, tells us in his book that when the Rev. F. Pickering, Mrs. Pickering, and he first went to Nanzela to found a mission there, they spent the first night in a little hut trying to sleep on a heap of mud inside. The chief's interpreter and huntsman called Lesapo, woke them at six o'clock in the morning, and gave them his master's request that they would be good enough to go and hunt big game, for his people needed food—indeed were starving—owing to the failure of the native crops and rinderpest. When the distance between our missionaries and the nearest shops could be reckoned in hundreds of miles, and the time to get fresh supplies of foods from England covered as much as two years, it is not difficult to understand that the missionaries were compelled to say immediately after breakfast of maize made into porridge, “A-hunting we will go.” They simply had to, if they were determined to keep alive. Once in stalking his prey, Mr. Chapman got separated from Mr. Pickering and lost his sense of direction after he had plunged into the thicket. Fortunately he had sufficient presence of mind to let off his rifle several times in quick succession, and this brought answering shots from Mr. Pickering, and very soon they were together once more.

I wonder how the missionary critics would like to dine off antelope, roast zebra, leopard chops, elephant steak or native locusts or rat—the two latter when the gun had failed to bring anything down! On one occasion our brave missionaries

had to fast for sixty hours. It came about on this wise. Mr. Pickering had a bad foot and could not walk. Upon Mr. Chapman fell the duty of stocking the larder. He went forth, rifle in hand, prepared to do his best. He followed up wart-hog, hartebeeste, antelope, veldebeeste, zebra, water-buck and reed-buck for two days; but it was not until the third day he managed to bring down a roan antelope, and their long fast was over. We all remembered our short rations in war days. Let us not forget that our brave missionaries in West and South Central Africa were allowed no food from England, and had to live upon their old supplies, the produce of native farms and the fish of the rivers and beasts of the bush. Their rifle was their very good friend in those trying times.

In Perils Often.

DURING the Great War I read the account of the sinking of the *Apaapa*, and when looking down the list of names of those who had lost their lives, I discovered that several missionaries had made "the great sacrifice." Like a flash there came to my remembrance the experience of the greatest missionary the world has seen since the days of Jesus Christ—the Apostle Paul. Thrice he suffered shipwreck; a night and a day he spent in the deep; in the city, the wilderness, and when on trek, moving from place to place, he was in perils often. And brave missionaries in Africa have faithfully followed in his steps. Nearly everybody has read the wonderful story of Mary Slessor, the Scotch weaver-girl who became "Ma" to tens and hundreds of thousands of West African negroes. One day messengers came, who reached her after travelling for eight hours through streams, big dark forests, and many towns, to beg that she would heal their chief, or king. She asked them to tell her what the sickness was. As they could not do so, she determined she would go back with them and see for herself. Her black friends said: "No, Ma! you must do no such thing. The way is full of peril; the streams are deep; the rains are come; unfriendly peoples may kill you; and the wild beasts will 'seek to devour you.'" But all that Mary Slessor—who, when a girl, dared not

cross a field with a cow in it—replied was, “I MUST go.” And go she did. Her boots became so wet she had to take them off and throw them away, then off came her stockings, and her dress got so torn by the trees in the bush that she lost that also. But hour after hour, with her head throbbing with fever and her body trembling with weariness, she pressed forward until she reached the sick man and healed him. When angry men were going to fight, she—taking her life in her hands—went in between them and scolded them and pleaded with them until they agreed to settle their palaver (quarrel) peacefully. When our first missionaries went into the heart of Africa they were four years before they got to their destination. For simply making marks in the sand with his umbrella whilst a pow-wow, or conference, was in progress, one of our missionaries was made a prisoner, dragged for some distance along the ground with his head downwards, and barely escaped with his life.

On another occasion, a powerful king threatened to make slaves of both the Rev. Henry Buckenham and Mr. Baldwin, and take Mrs. Buckenham for one of his own wives! The Rev. W. Chapman tells us that one day quite suddenly there appeared on the grounds of his mission a large body of armed men. When they got within a certain distance of the house, they sat down and waited. He did not know their language, and they were ignorant of his. All he could do was to pray to the God of Heaven to protect him, and sure enough God heard and answered his prayer. The Rev. W. Christie when “trekking” in Nigeria had some hair-

breadth escapes. Once he had found himself suddenly placed between two black forces armed for war, and escaped only by a miracle. At one place they would neither sell nor give him anything to eat or drink; and in another he was allowed to live in an open shed in the middle of the town. Under the cover of the night's thick darkness—not a dozen yards from where he slept—a foul murder was committed. Far too near to be pleasant, eh? The splendid courage and endurance of our missionaries of the Cross is to be accounted for in the same way as Paul explained his: “I can do all things in Christ who strengtheneth me.”

Boring In.

A FEW years ago there came a missionary to this country from the "Region of the Long Grass." That was the name by which he styled his mission-field, situate somewhere in the Congo River Basin in Central Africa. As he had been away for twenty-two years he had a wonderful story to tell, and he told it well in speech, but as well, or better, in a book called "Thinking Black."* In the book he describes the long marches and exciting experiences on the way from the West Coast to his mission-field, in a chapter which he calls "Boring In." It is a very suitable word for the methods and incidents of pioneer work. Like the white ant that never rests until it gets to the heart of the wood, and like the seeker who continues sending down into the strata of Mother Earth his boring tools till he has found the minerals he seeks, so the missionary starts from his base, and by slow degrees, and more and more, he reaches, occupies and changes town after town. He is never satisfied, but keeps "boring in." Like the famous Catholic Missionary in the East, his first thought and his last word is: "Forward." I've been engaged with others on this work, and sometimes gone alone. Let me set down two or three of our experiences when "boring in." Mr. Boocock and I went to a place called Ebukhu. One

* "Thinking Black," by Dan Crawford.

felt not a little queer on the journey from the creek to the town to notice that everyone approaching us from the other direction, as soon as they saw we were white, dropped whatever they were carrying on their heads, and fled to the bush. We wisely persevered, and on reaching the place immediately asked to be taken to the home of the Ete, or head chief. We introduced ourselves as "God-palaver" men, and told him we had come to make friends with him and his people, and if he had no objection we would like him to call them together so that we might hold "palaver." Fortunately most of the men were at home from farm and fishing grounds. So we soon had a capital company. Mr. Boocock and I both had a turn at telling these strong, curious men-folk the story of God their Father and His Love-gift, Jesus Christ, their Saviour. It was a thrilling experience, as refreshing as a cup of cold water on a very hot day. To be the first to tell a congregation the glad tidings of a Saviour's love is a privilege that does not often come to ordinary people like myself. How the wonder and the freshness and the power of it fascinated them! They listened, scarcely daring to breathe! On that tour we were well received everywhere, but when I went alone to visit Inwañ a second time things were changed. The trouble was the men were on the spree. When I got to where the chiefs were, they were maudlin and difficult to talk to. One was quarrelsome, and did his best to make me angry and have a big row, but I pressed my teeth and my lips together, and refused to say an angry or unwise word, and came quickly away. The last bit of boring I did was in another part

of Oron altogether, at a place called Itak. There were two reasons which made me anxious to go. The first was: the people had a name for being independent to the point of lawlessness, and had often given the British Government trouble. Somehow I felt sure that people of that type were well worth capturing, and, once captured, would make the finest type of soldiers in the Army of King Jesus. And the second was: its nearness to the Nsit Country. Mr. Hanney went with me. We started early, and walked many miles between 6.30 a.m. and 11 o'clock. Upon arrival we felt tired and hungry, and so rested in the palaver-house and had a meal before seeking an interview with the chiefs. They came to the building where we were, and we soon got to business. I wish I had a portrait of that fine old head man, his beard plaited in front and his hair done up in tiny plaits behind, to show you, but unfortunately I have not. When we talked to them as we did at Ebukhu, they listened without grunt, or sound, or smile, until we had finished. Then they talked amongst themselves, and in the end the head chief said they were all pleased we had gone to see them. They had heard about our Mission, and now they had seen and heard us for themselves. They felt our word was a good word, and would we please send them a teacher soon? Generally the native acts on the advice, "Never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow," but not so the chiefs of Itak. They brought a goat and laid it at our feet to seal the bargain there and then, just like deposits are paid in this country to fasten a sale. We gave them the price of two pieces of cloth, and then started

for home well satisfied. But what do you think? We had scarcely started before a messenger caught us up and asked our interpreter to go back as the Ete (head chief) wanted him very particularly. When he returned to the town, what do you think they asked him? "Were the eight shilling pieces we had given them real money or just buttons?" They had never seen makara (white stranger's) money before, and wanted to make sure! How cautious and prudent, eh? But we got our foot in for the Master, and not long afterwards were over the borders into the Nsit Country and beyond.

The Cost of a Road.

IN the Oron Country there are plenty of bush-paths, but very few roads, and the people would rather be without the few there are. Towns prefer to be hidden from public gaze, and to be exceedingly difficult to locate by strangers or enemies. Even when they have pretty well buried themselves in the forest, or at the head of a long and winding creek far away from the river bank, the folks do not always feel secure. To make their safety doubly sure, they build a stout fence, or stockade, all round their section, and to get over it you must strike a particular bush-path and climb over a stile. The root of the whole matter lies in the fact that one town does not have much to do with other towns, and that because they simply don't want to. They are suspicious and jealous of each other, and so hold aloof. It is a great pity because all are losers. The British Government sees that, and has made the few good roads there are. It is the only way to open up the country, and make travel easy and safe. But strong and respected as the British Government is by the native, these roads have not been made without difficulty and trouble. The Efik is not so simple as many folks have taken him to be. He can put two and two together as well as we can, and he "tumbled to it" right away that once a road was made anywhere near his village or township he could say good-bye to secrecy,

seclusion and an independent life. As these things were highly prized by him, he objected, and when the folks in our area in the Oron Country were told that the Government intended making a good wide road thirty miles or so long, from Akani Obio to Eket, in the Ibeno Country, they were greatly upset. The inhabitants of four towns—where we now have out-stations: Eyo Abasse, Nduñuko, Ebukhu, Okokuduñ—determined to have nothing to do with the project, and if ordered to help in any way, to resist to the bitter end. They formed what is known as the blood-bond. Sure enough they were asked to supply their share of labour towards making it, and at once *afanikoñ* (trouble) began. The native Commissioner sent the clerk of his Court with a small boy for company to call upon the chiefs of these towns, and tell them what amount of help they were expected to give. As soon almost as he started on his journey the towns to be visited knew of his coming. On his way the clerk was warned by friends to turn back, as trouble was brewing. He refused, saying: "I am under orders, and must do my duty." When he got near Nduñuko the men, half drunk and full of devilry, met him, and the little chap, and at once began to jostle them. Their aim was to make the clerk lose his temper and do something foolish, thus providing an excuse for taking his life. The full story will never be known, but it appears they got him down and murdered him in cold blood, and the little fellow they crucified near the centre of the township. To share the responsibility alike, the clerk's body was dismembered and shared amongst the

four towns I've mentioned. When the news leaked out, as it eventually did, there was an expedition of soldiers sent against them, and they were defeated and punished. The road was eventually made, and ever since has served the countryside splendidly. Travelling is much easier, life is much safer, and old feuds and suspicions are fast passing away. The folks of the different towns are getting to know each other better and trust each other more. The story of that bit of road-making serves as a parable setting forth the experience of all Gospel pioneers from Christ down to the present day. It cost Christ His life to become the Way for God's children throughout the world to travel on and reach God. And every true follower of Him is a maker of roads and leveller of paths. One of Livingstone's great dreams was to open a way for the white man into the very heart of darkest Africa. Said he, "I will open a path through this country—or perish." In doing it, his life was in danger hundreds of times. Angry natives attacked him; a wounded lion shattered his shoulder blade; brutal slave traders constantly sought his death, but nothing stopped him. "Fire, water, stone walls could not stop Livingstone." Every missionary has some sort of opposition to meet. In West Africa—the slave owner, the witch doctor, those devoted to ancestor worship—object stoutly to the changes missionary work brings. They secretly plot and they openly persecute, until very often before the road is made the cost in suffering and blood has been a heavy one. But it is always worth while. The Master blazed tracks and made roads. And shall not His servants do likewise?

“On Keeping School.”

THE missionary in his time is called upon to play many parts. He has to build, to farm, to doctor, to act as umpire in very strange circumstances, and above all else he has to teach and preach. Preaching is what he goes out to do, but as soon as he gets there almost, he feels he **MUST TEACH** also. All missionaries think alike about this. James Chalmers of New Guinea—the man who loved to travel and open new districts in the name of the Lord Jesus—was so sure of the necessity of keeping school that even he used to take a hand at it himself. Gathering a few tiny tots about him he would take the alphabet card and **TEACH!** Visit any of our mission stations in Nigeria, Aliwal North, or South Central Africa, and you will find humble buildings of mud and wattle at every outpost which serve as mission schools. These—humble though they be—are a great advance on what had to serve at the beginning of things.

When I began in Nigeria we used the ordinary church forms as desks, and a “wobbly” table—which served as a pulpit on Sundays—as a superior writing desk for the two or three scholars who were in advance of the rest. For a blackboard I used the side of a box, until the chalk defied the duster and elbow grease, and then I had to get a fresh one. How do you think we turned ordinary benches into desks? It was quite easy. The boys and girls

either sat or knelt on the floor and put their slates or their copy-books on the form, and—there you are!

There came a time when we missionaries could not keep school ourselves unless other very important work was to be neglected. So what do you think we did? We got the Mission Board and Christian Endeavourers at home to build a big school, proper "English fashion," so that Nigerian youths might be trained to keep school. From that Training Institute at Oron scores have gone to take charge of these schools in the bush. Whilst the first batch were getting trained we did our best to pick up suitable supplies. One of these was named Elijah. When I paid a visit to this school, held in one of the funniest, pokiest mud buildings I ever set eyes on, I was much amused as well as pleased. Elijah was teaching them many things besides the three R's—amongst the rest, what good boys and men never do. I dare not tell you what these were, except that GOOD boys and men never dream of SMOKING!

At another school I had to employ a native Christian lady. She knew very little English, but she was a good and intelligent reader of Efik, the native language. And for quite a long time she taught her scholars A B C's, the multiplication table, and how to read the New Testament in their own tongue. I felt that was far better than nothing.

When the Rev. W. Chapman* first kept school at Nanzela he found that the best way to teach his scholars the numeral was to introduce them as Mr.

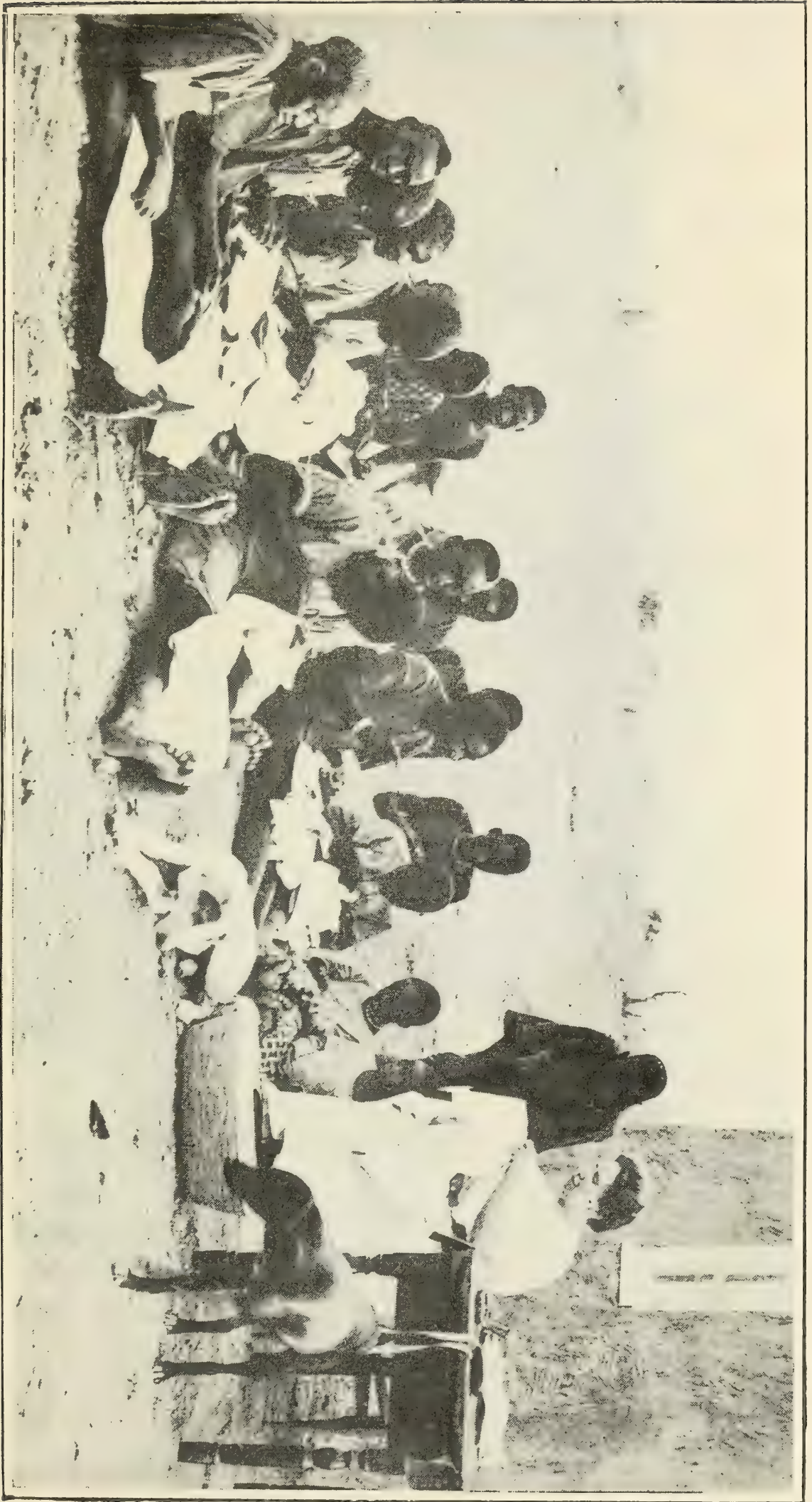
* "A Missionary Pathfinder," by the Rev. W. Chapman (Primitive Methodist Book Room).

One and Mr. Two, and so on. He did the same with the twenty-six letters. He described them as people, and said capital A was Mr. A, and small 'a' was his wife. When he got them on far enough to read words he put the name of one of the scholars on the board, and made them spell it through. The scholar was amazed to look at his name for the *first* time in his life, and all the others got up and slapped him on the back, or shook him by the hand in their excitement. Funny, wasn't it? Yet from such small and humble beginnings encouraging results have proceeded.

During the War it was almost impossible to carry our schools on, because the missionaries could not get from Makara Obio (England) the necessary material, BUT this turned out for good, as it led the natives to fix all their thoughts upon God's Book and God Himself. At Bende the Bible, printed in Ibo, has had a remarkable sale, largely because of the work of the schools. And "the entrance of God's Word giveth light." It is for that reason the missionaries on the Congo make it a condition of church membership that all applicants are able to read the Bible in their own language. Without the bush schools, this could never be.

Let us Pray.

IN the long, long ago, the Greeks were accounted the wisest people living on the earth. And certainly they said some very wise things. Here is one of them: "Man is the 'up-looking one.'" By that they meant, that man feels there is a Higher Power than himself, and to Him he looks up and prays. I was reminded of that saying again and again when I lived amongst the people in the Oron bush country. And you will not wonder when I give you examples of incidents that brought it so often to my mind. I had lived in West Africa quite a long time before I got the chance to inspect every nook and cranny of a native compound, or dwelling-house. When it came I found hidden right away from prying eyes a little room with some upright sticks fastened in the floor, and with clots of mud at the other end, and these were—praying sticks! Near to Arsibong Town, our first mission station in Nigeria, was a little fishing village called Aqua Obio. I did not see quite so much of these villagers because they held aloof from a good deal of the life and activities of the Arsibong people. But one day my interest was very much quickened because of something unusual that happened. At the entrance to their village, just on the boundary of their parish, was a very large tree. Round it, both the men and women were gathered, hold-



MRS. EDWIN SMITH'S SEWING CLASS.

ing each other's hands, until they formed a very large circle indeed. At a given signal, they commenced to leap and dance and shout. By-and-by they made, in turn, for the roots of the tree dripping with the blood of an animal slain in sacrifice. Into the blood they dipped their fingers and smeared their foreheads and chests, crying all the while to the Spirit which they felt sure lived in that tree: "Take care of me O! Take care of me O!" What was that fantastic dance and sacrifice and cry but the Aqua Obio people's way of praying to a Higher Power than themselves? One of the marked changes wrought by the Gospel is seen in the new ideas of prayer and methods of praying. Among all the youths who came to live at the mission-house, or entered the Oron Training Institute as students, I never found one but prayed very quietly and reverently. When John Enang Gill, as a boy, was staying in this country he came home from the prayer meeting one Sunday night and asked why Mr. So-and-So shouted so when he prayed. "Does he think God is deaf or that He dwells in a land far, far away?" Until the missionary knows the language sufficiently well to pray in it himself, he makes it a practice to call upon a native Christian to open the meeting with prayer. I frequently called upon a fine Christian woman called Deborah Ime. She never failed to offer her compliments to Jehovah, and to express her sense of unworthiness and her glad acknowledgment of His greatness and power and love. It is very, very unusual for a native woman to shed tears, but I've seen the tears slowly run down Deborah's cheeks as she has felt the joy of being able to talk with

God face to face. The Rev. George Bell, who is the missionary at Bottler Point, Fernando Poo, told me that at one of their church prayer meetings, Barnabas, his interpreter, offered prayer for a missionary and his wife on the high seas going home for a well-earned rest. And this is what he asked God to do for them : " Be Thou our eyes and watch over them, be Thou our hands and feed them, be Thou our feet and guide them." Beautiful, was it not? In the life-story of Christina Forsyth, a missionary at Xolobe, in Fingoland, there is a story of an old and poor Fingo woman who prayed to God like this : " Lord, I have no home, Thou art my home. I have no goods, Thou art my portion. I have no food, Thou art the bread which came down from heaven, of which, if we eat, we shall never hunger." The twelve disciples, after they had heard Jesus pray, asked Him saying, " Lord, teach us to pray." Don't you feel like that when you read of the beautiful way these Africans talk with God?

A Striking Contrast.

SOME years back I lived at a place called Arsi-bong Town. It was here where our missionary work in Nigeria first got its foothold. I did not live there very long but a number of things occurred during my brief stay which I shall not forget very easily. Amongst them was the following incident. Men, principally chiefs, had had their cattle disturbed at night-time by the visits of a hungry leopard, and when the visits led to injured cattle, or their complete loss, the owners soon saw that if they were to have any animals spared they must bestir themselves, and either catch the leopard or destroy it. So one morning, when word came to town that the leopard could be seen hiding in the thick part of some bush, every man jack of them laid hold of any weapon within reach that would serve, and sallied forth, fifty to sixty in number, determined to surround the spot where the leopard was, and kill him once for all. I saw them go past the mission-house in single file, armed with cutlass, club, sword or gun, talking very excitedly about what they were going to do. I was very busy at the time, and did not trouble to join them. To tell you the truth, I felt there was no need. There were enough men to EAT the leopard, let alone kill it. Judge of my surprise, therefore, when about an hour later they all trudged back without leopard or skin. Upon enquiry, I found they had not

struck a single blow. They got to the leopard's lair right enough, and made a cordon right round him, but when he began to growl and show his nasty temper and teeth and claws, someone began to tell how one of their neighbours had had his face badly mauled by an angry leopard, and the recital of their townsman's mishap filled them with a strong and dark dread lest that, or a worse thing, should befall any of them. To make sure they did not share a similar fate, they broke up and came back home there and then. Probably they consoled one another with that prized saying of the shirkers: "He who runs away lives to fight another day." I can hardly tell you how I felt at the time over the excessive prudence and fears of these folks. I suppose the American saying just about hit the mark: I was "tickled to death." Several years afterwards, when I was living in the Oron Country near to Ibaka, I had an experience quite opposite in character. One day, when traversing the bush not far from the Ibaka Creek, I heard the noise of tom-toms, the blowing of horns, etc., and when I hurried in the direction of the sounds, I found some excited people impatiently waiting at the head of the creek for the arrival of the merry makers. And all in good time, there came in sight a large and gaily decorated canoe. It was full of youths from about sixteen to eighteen years of age. Their mothers had cleared them off a few days before to catch alive as many animals of the bush and river bank as they could. And they were ordered to carry out the instructions without stick, trap, gun, or weapon of any kind. They had now returned full of riot and joy because they had captured young

monkeys, alligators, porcupines, a bush cat, and ever so many other things. Their parents received them with pride and delight, for they felt their sons had proved themselves worthy of their brave sires. I am not going to try and account for the different spirit of the folks belonging to the two towns, but simply tell you what I have often thought about it all. I felt that when those Arisbong Town people got to know Jesus, the Strong Son of God, properly, they would forthwith cease to be so weak and cowardly, and become brave and heroic in their own land and amongst their own kith and kin. I was certainly filled with a burning desire to make the Hero of heroes known to these brave Ibaka youths, who had got such grit and vim and virility. Christ never once showed the white feather whatever confronted Him, and I felt that if they could only know Him their brave spirits would hail the Bravest of the brave as their Lord and Master, and follow Him whithersoever He should lead, even to the ends of the earth. It has all fallen out even as I felt it would. The Arsibong people have long since become patient and strong and daring; and numbers of the Ibaka people are proving their willingness to go through the fire and water if need so require. And the Word of the Lord has free course and is glorified amongst them all every week of the year and every day of the week.

The Old and the New.

ONE afternoon just after school was over for the day, I went to the farthest end of our mission grounds at Oron and saw a young fellow with only a strip of cotton cloth around his loins, yet strutting about as much as to say : “ I am lord and monarch of all I survey, my right there is none to dispute.” Just why he should give himself such lordly airs I was, at first, puzzled to know. But when he came nearer I found that his body had been decorated with many coloured chinks, and I was sure if I could get to know the reason for that, it would also explain his proud and defiant mien. And I got to know before very long. He was exhibiting himself that day, and in that fashion, to advertise the fact that he had entered the Egbo Society, and was thenceforward entitled to the respect and privileges and power attaching to that secret and influential society. It cost a large sum of money to “ buy ” admission, but the young fellow considered it cheap at the price. Probably he had a father who had been saving ever since his son was born to purchase this great privilege for him. Upon making judicious enquiries, I found out more about Egbo than meets the eye of the traveller-in-a-hurry, or the man who never lets his curiosity send him poking and prying into matters. It appears there are quite a number of grades of membership, and the passage upwards from one to

another is a very costly business. The top grade constitutes the order of "the peacock's feather." To belong to that order is as proud a distinction in Nigeria as to be made a Knight of the British Empire at home. An old European trader, who lived in Calabar, managed to secure that coveted distinction, and whatever else it was worth, or not worth, it brought a good deal of business to his factory that otherwise he would have had to go without. I learned also that admission into Egbo is so jealously guarded that only one woman had ever been accepted for membership. Of the power and wealth of Egbo there hardly seems to be an end. I was told that the reason why no compounds had windows that faced the town streets was lest anyone not a member should be able, by prying, to discover any of the Egbo secrets. Egbo has the power to make laws, exact levies, shut up towns for days together, make certain things and people taboo, and flog without mercy. It claims certain fish as its peculiar portion, and altogether, if we except the British Government, is without rival or equal through the land. Do you wonder, then, at the strutting airs of the newly admitted member, and his determination that everyone should know of his great good fortune? A scene like that is one of the outstanding features of the old order of things. Now let me introduce you to one of the outstanding features of the new order the Mission creates. It is Sunday morning; and to a youth in a certain compound it is the day he has prayed for and hoped to see. It is **THE** day of his life. He has attended the Church services; for some time he has been counted a member of the

catechumen or preparation class; eventually his application to be examined as to his manner of life, his knowledge of God's Word, and his reason for accepting the Christian faith, has been granted. The examination having proved satisfactory, his attendance before a meeting of the Church members had followed. Enquiries had been also made in the compound where he lived as to his honesty, purity, good temper and truthful speech. An interview with the missionary based upon the report of the Church Meeting proved the climax. All having been successfully passed through, he is to be publicly admitted to-day as a member of the Christian Church by baptism. It is such a special occasion he must have a special dress, all of white. (Their idea of holiness is cleanness, whiteness.) When the first bell rings half an hour before the morning service, he is visited by two Church members who act as his proud escort through the town to the church. In the church he, along with others maybe, occupy a seat on the front bench facing the pulpit. To him in very direct fashion the preacher preaches about the duties and privileges and responsibilities of the Christian life. He is never allowed for so much as a moment to imagine that he "can be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease." Then come the heart-searching questions about past, present and future, and these having been publicly put, and as publicly replied to, he is sprinkled with water, and in the name of God, and with the right hand of fellowship, admitted into a society greater and better than any Egbo—the Society of Jesus. After the singing of "Happy Day," and the Benediction, all the church and con-

gregation gather about him and congratulate him and wish him God's richest blessing. That over, they form a triumphal procession and sing him round the town—every part of it—and then sing in the compound by the door of his room; one of the leaders offers prayer commending the new beginner to Jesus that he may run the race with patience, looking unto Him, and he is left to enjoy the wonder and thrill and gracious meaning of it all! Not many years ago the old order of things was much the oftener in evidence; to-day the new and better order carries the palm. Christian processions are outnumbering Egbo displays. And, please God, a day shall come when Egbo, Ju-ju, and all that is kindred to them, shall be sent to the limbo of a dark and dreary past.

The Drudge and the Angel.

A LADY missionary went on a visit to a missionary friend residing at a place some distance away. After she had been there a day or two, she was taken round the town and introduced to certain of the chiefs and Christians. When talking with the "Ete," or big chief, she noticed some boys and girls playing about his compound, and politely asked him how many children he had. He counted them upon his fingers, saying, "One, two, three, four, five, Ma! I get five piccins." The lady missionary was surprised at the answer, and showed it. There were many more than five playing about. It dawned upon the chief the cause of her surprise, and so he added, "The rest are girl piccins, and girls don't count." Just fancy, girls, not being worth numbering! Shocking, isn't it? And yet that chief saw nothing wrong in it. From the day of birth unto the day of death heathen girls and women folks have a hard time of it, and are simply looked upon as useful drudges and beasts of burden. If they have a value at all, it is when they are betrothed in marriage by their parents to a man they have probably never seen, and he hands over in goods or cash an amount fixed upon as a sort of betrothal fee. The girl gets none of this. It is entirely for the parents' benefit and disposal. One day when staying with the Rev. W. Christie, at Urua Eye, we decided we would

take a long walk after tea. It would be cool, we knew, and the stretch would prove enjoyable in every way. When a good distance from the Mission we were attracted by the sounds of revelry. They were not the harsh, raucous noises that men make when at play, and this excited our curiosity to know the why and wherefore of it. We followed in the direction of the sounds of jollity, and came upon a number of young girls dancing, etc., etc. They had just been released from the bondage and degradation of "the fattening room," and in the course of a few days the husbands chosen for them by their parents would come and take them away to their new abode. Ignorant of the fate in store for them, they resolved to be merry. The sight of those bonny, jolly girls at play pleased me. I could not grudge them their fleeting joy, but it filled me with sadness as I guessed the sufferings awaiting some of them in their unknown to-morrows. After I had got back to my home again at Oron, I heard a story about one of these girls sad enough, surely, to move a heart of stone! The husband who came to claim her was, said Mr. Christie, as vile-looking a specimen of a man as he had ever seen. She shrank from him in horror, and begged her parents to pay back the dowry and she would do anything humanly possible to repay them. They refused, saying they would be forever disgraced if she did not accompany her husband to his home. She threatened to throw herself into the river, but it was of no avail. Her parents literally turned her out of house and home. She was not long away. So abominable was her treatment as the new wife (the latest comer amongst

many) that she actually ran away and appealed to Mr. Christie for shelter and redress. For the most part public opinion was against her. It was *wrong* for a young woman to show such independence! At Jamestown a poor drudge of a wife came to see me about her trouble. She was actually shedding tears!—a sight very seldom to be witnessed in Africa. A woman in tears is about as rare an occurrence as an earthquake! When I listened to her sad, piteous story, and looked at her back striped with wounds—the result of her husband's flogging with a whip—I no longer marvelled at her tears. She was one of three wives it turned out, and her husband had brought a fourth to the compound or house, and thenceforward studiously neglected the other three. When she spoke for herself and companions, and appealed for fairer treatment, the flogging was all the reply she received. I really believe that the rankling sense of injustice, coupled with her feeling of utter helplessness to alter it, being a woman, caused the tears even more than the pain inflicted by the whip! Where the Gospel is preached for any length of time, a change in the standing and treatment of women slowly but surely follows. At a fishing town on the opposite bank of the Mbo River from Jamestown, the women left their husbands in a body, took canoe and came to stay at Jamestown until their overlords and masters were prepared to give them fairer treatment. It was something new and unheard-of in that part of the world, that wives should go on strike! But it did good. It was one of those strikes I found myself in full sympathy with. When men and women yield to the Gospel invitation and become out-and-

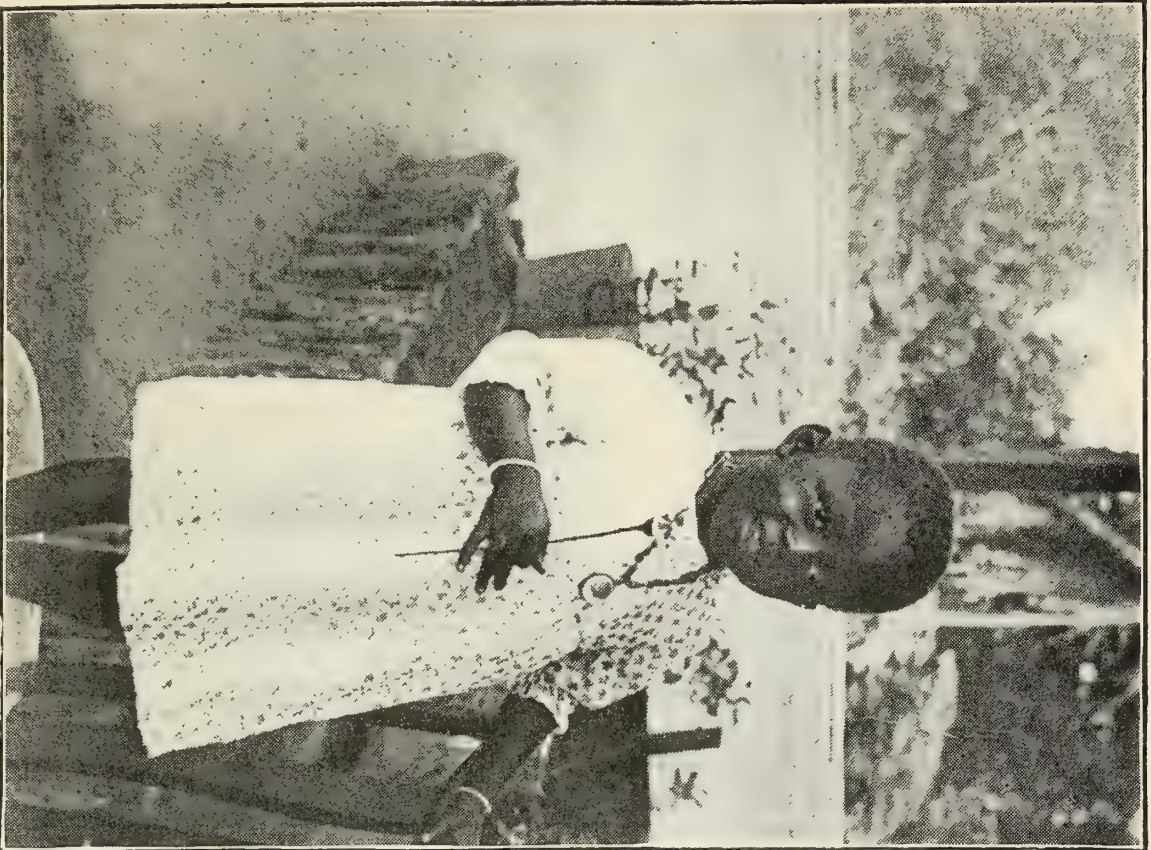
out Christians, they get married "Christian fashion," and found a home on Christian lines. This means that the woman's position is entirely altered. I always think with pleasure of one of our church officials getting married. They chose each other because they genuinely liked each other, and after they were married I used to like to pay calls on them fairly often just to watch the process of husband and wife falling deeply in love with each other. It was a source of delight to me because I recognised it as one of the convincing manifestations of the power of Christ's Gospel to bless. Can you really believe that when the people of that same town first saw the missionary and his wife walk out together side by side, and maybe arm in arm, they are dumbfounded? From that state of mind to the home conditions of that church official was a big leap, was it not? It all lies just here. Christ's power in the hearts of men and women changes houses into homes, and lifts wives who would otherwise be drudges and practically slaves to the level of equals, and eventually makes them "angels of the home," just as Florence Nightingale was the "angel of the lamp." I have not seen it, but I'm given to understand that the home-life of the Rev. John Enang Gill (our first native ordained minister) and his wife Mary, with their bonny bairns, is the most delightful sight to be found on the banks of the Mbo River. To John, Mary is indeed and manifestly the "angel of the home." And with all my heart I say, "Thank God for it."

A Bit of Good Salt.

JESUS CHRIST startled His disciples one day when He told them they must take themselves very seriously, for they were the salt of the earth. I believe they could not have been more surprised if something akin to a bombshell had fallen at their feet. Some of them might possibly have heard of the Roman proverb that "it is salt that keeps the world alive and sweet." At any rate, they all knew of its power to preserve things and to cleanse and heal. I never forgot this latter ministry of salt after going as a scholar with our Sunday School for the annual outing, or treat. When the seaside was reached, it was a race between us as to which lad could divest himself of boots and stockings first and be in the water. It was a close thing amongst several of us as to whom was first. But though there was no certainty about the one in first, we were all positively sure about the one who came out first. He was the lad who had forgotten he had a bad scratch on his leg until the salt in the water reminded him of it. How he shouted and danced, and, would you believe it—cried! And yet the salt was doing his leg good. When I think of the condition of things which prevail in a heathen town, I am driven to one conclusion, and that is, no one can be a true Christian amongst these conditions unless he is as positive and unyielding, as

true to himself and his Christian principles, as is good salt. We think it requires grit and courage to be true soldiers of the Cross in playground, school and workshop here. And we all know that it required that, and more, in the Army and Navy during these last four or five years, but it is ten times more so in West Africa—the devil's playground. Almost from the very beginning we have had those in our Missions as staunch and steadfast as good salt always is. I am reminded just here of a youth who passed through our Jamestown day-school and attended the services regularly, and probably came to the training class held for those who had thoughts of and desires for a Christian life. He was called away up country, and stayed there, a hundred miles, roughly speaking, from our nearest Mission. What did he do? Become like those about him? Nay; like the salt, he practised his Christian principles without fear and without favour, and made his power and presence known to the help and blessing of many. In the great extensions of these last ten years, our Mission has reached the town where he had proved himself a bit of good salt, and found him at the head of a church with a number of Christian disciples ready to give the missionary an enthusiastic welcome. I have mentioned elsewhere that Arsibong Town was our starting-point in Nigeria. Here, in this one town, I've come across several illustrations which show that Christ makes His disciples to-day, just what He made of those early disciples of His! One day when the missionary was away on business, there was a death in town. If our Society Steward had not used his influence, there would have been a heathen

burial, and the drinking associated with such a rite. But he pleaded and showed them how much more fitting it was to dispose of the dead in the sober, reverent fashion of the Mission, and what is more gained his point! In the early days of our work there Egbo's influence was very powerful, and a great stumbling-block in the way of our advance. Yet I lived to see the time when Egbo, instead of parading the streets, laying a paralysing hand on the everyday life of the town, etc., and indulging in disgraceful drunken orgies, had to confine its play and celebrations to a compound, and even there had to shut itself off from the public gaze. For this tremendous change there was only one cause, and that the Christian sentiment and conscience which had spread until it constituted public opinion, and silently but surely governed the town. When the boundaries between the Kamerun Colony and Nigeria were re-arranged, it fell out that Arsi-bong Town was included in German territory. Quite a large proportion of the inhabitants left when it got known, but some had perforce to remain. Amongst these latter was a devoted Christian, Anie Kofon by name. When the Mission had to remove to Oron, and owing to shortage of staff, even a native teaching evangelist could not be spared them, Anie Kofon used all his spare time and all the weight of his influence to keep together his fellow Christians also remaining behind, and to win new converts to the Christ. The missionary at Oron went over every six weeks or so, stayed usually a full week-end, preaching, exhorting, counselling and doing the work of a Christian shepherd. It fell to my lot on a number of occasions



AFION NANCY NAINRU : A RESCUED
PICCIN AT THE AGE OF THREE.



AN ILA NATIVE.

to go over and do this particular bit of work. There were many delightful tit-bits in one's experiences, but the greatest satisfaction and pleasure came to me through Anie Kofon's zeal and jealousy for the Lord of Hosts. It was impossible to doubt that he was the Christian conscience—the good salt of the depleted township. It is of such as he that the words of the prophet were certainly written: "A man shall be a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, and a shelter in the time of storm." Anie Kofon's name never stood as high as that of the big chiefs and wealthy natives of his own land, but I am certain that he was one in whom Christ was well pleased, accounting him as belonging to those who are the salt of the earth.

Foes who became Friends.

THE entrance of a missionary into a new district does not please everybody. And the missionary is not surprised. It is what he expects. When Jesus entered Gadara and began work there, the owners of some pigs were soon in opposition; and when Paul went to Ephesus, and many other places, there were always some ready to stir up bad feeling and upset things. Since it fell out thus with Jesus and Paul, the missionary refuses to be discouraged, or give in, when his turn comes. Should, however, those who have been unfriendly change, and support him and his work, his joy knows no bounds. And this kind of thing HAS happened, you know. Robert Moffatt was warned concerning Afrikander—a man with an evil name and record. Moffatt's supporters were sure that Afrikander would seek his life. Just at first their fears proved true, but by-and-by there came a change, and finally Afrikander became Moffatt's true and life-long friend. King Leewanika was a great stumbling-block to our first missionaries on the Zambesi, but in a few years he saw how foolish his conduct had been, and he turned into a true and powerful friend of all the messengers of the Cross. In the Oron Country the trouble has always come from either witch doctor, the Egbo society, or masters of slaves. Everywhere opposition has died down, and in a few cases old-time foes have become

quite friendly—if not out-and-out Christians. The first town we entered in the Oron Country was Jamestown. All the opposition there came from the Egbo society. At first, when its members engaged in their queer play, they shut the people up in their houses, and refused to allow the children to come to the Mission School, or the people to the evening services at the Church. If anyone disobeyed they pounced upon them in the street and flogged them with the horrid Egbo whip. Later, when this ban had been removed, a number of Egbo members did their best to spoil our Sunday services by passing and re-passing the church, in a half-drunken condition, and by loud noises, etc., sought to drown the preacher's voice and make the congregation nervous and afraid. But the bitterest foe of all was Asuquo, second in the local leadership of Egbo. So angry was he with the Mission and all its ways that he tried to murder our native schoolmaster, Mr. Peter Davis, with a sword. He pulled down our church fences, alleging they were on his land, and built very much higher ones to block out the light from the church. When he was ordered by the King to take it down again, he cursed the missionary with great gusto, and vowed eternal hatred against the Mission. A great change came over Asuquo, however, after his favourite wife fell very sick. All kinds of native medicines were tried, but in vain. She grew rapidly worse. For some days he was torn between his love for his wife and his hatred of the Mission. Finally love conquered, and very humbly he sought the help of the missionary's wife, begging her to give his sick wife medicine to make her strong again. His request

was not refused, and in the end the patient completely recovered. So grateful was Asuquo that he ceased troubling either mission or missionary again. Some time afterwards he left Jamestown because of a fight in which he was badly mauled. A few years later, when sailing in the mission boat past some unknown bush, I was hailed by a voice shouting in friendly tones: "Etubom O, makomo!" ("Master, I compliment you"). It was Asuquo. From his joy at seeing me again, and his kindly enquiries after "Ma" (Mrs. Ward), it was manifest that our old foe had become a warm friend.

Heroes All.

THERE are people who scoff at the idea that a “nigger,” as they rudely call him, could ever qualify as a hero. They declare it to be ridiculous to ever suggest such a thing. In their judgment—and they profess to know—the negro is very little better than a monkey. I remember once being told that on my way home. What do you think I said? Just this: “I quite acknowledge you know more about monkeys than I do, though I’ve seen hundreds of them and of many different kinds. Probably your time and interest have allowed you to make a closer acquaintance than I can boast of; but you certainly know less about negroes.” He did not relish being given the palm as an expert on monkeys, and dropped the subject like a hot potato. Against the scoffers, and all that anybody else likes to say to the contrary, I’m going to place the testimony of my brother missionaries, and a story belonging to my own experience. From a place called Roodekop, situate on the Rand in South Africa, I believe, comes the following story. It is sent by the missionary on the spot. The leader of the Primitive Methodist Church at Roodekop is a man named Leeuw. He deserves to be the leader because he has been its mainstay for a number of years. When he was young and strong he earned good wages at the mines, and his wife also earned money by taking in washing, so that they were comfortably off. But with the increase of years he cannot now work so hard or earn so much. His wife’s eyesight has become defective, and she cannot take in washing now, like she used to do. Since the War began, the prices of everything have

soared nearly as high as an aeroplane, and these fine old Christians have found it impossible to get enough to eat. It was the missionary's turn to spend a Sunday at Roodekop, when things were reaching their very worst. Quite in a casual way the missionary found that at three o'clock that afternoon they had not broken their fast that day. Their cupboard was like Mother Hubbard's—BARE—so what could they do but fast? They would not steal, and to beg they were ashamed. Leeuw and his wife discussed the question of going where prospects might be brighter and opportunities more numerous for such as they. But Leeuw felt he could not leave the Church at Roodekop. He would sooner STARVE first! This incident from the South puts me in mind of what happened at Arsibong Town when the people got to know we were about to remove the headquarters of our Mission—probably to Oron. They held a church meeting, at which Mr. Banham and I were present. The occasion was felt by everyone to be of unusual importance. When the people spoke, they used words which befitted "the parting of the ways." When common agreement was arrived at, this was what they asked us to do, viz., allow a number of influential heads of families to go with us on our next visit to Oron, and help them to secure sites for homes at the very least. They faced the grave possibility of being unable to secure ground for farms, and decided it was better to live where the Mission settled down—farm or no farm—for they said: "Gospel-palaver he done come before bread-palaver and yam-palaver!" Splendid, wasn't it? From far away Bende we hear of the splendid life and influence of a bright

young man named Onye-Oghu. He is an out-and-out Christian in a part of Nigeria that is described as "Hell's playground." Along with the other members of his Church, he underwent awful persecutions. Onye-Oghu was once tied up for days, then flogged and driven from the neighbourhood. The leaders of the persecution vowed they would murder him if he came back. So into exile he went to escape being killed. But he was not idle, his influence and efforts soon told for good, and he became the means of leading a bright young chief's son, Njoka, to become a Christian. When the Training Institute was first opened at Oron, I had a number of applications to enter. The one that stirred me most deeply was that of Daniel Effa's from Ibaka. He, along with a friend, had walked miles to apply for admission. I questioned him, and everything was satisfactory until I found he had not taken his widowed mother into confidence. I sent him back to see her and talk it out with her. It appears that when she knew what was in his heart, she became very angry and used every means to get him to change his mind. It was all to no purpose, however. In a frenzy, little short of madness surely, she ordered his body to be anointed as though he were a corpse, and then commanded the household to begin a period of mourning for her son Effa, who was dead to her for evermore. When he got away and reached us at Oron to settle down as a student at the Institute, I could tell he had had a roughish time. But when I heard all, I felt he had been through hell. Would you call *him* a hero or would you not?

“Giving is Joy.”

THIS title is not my own. I've borrowed it from Switzerland. The chance to do it has come through the great and terrible War now happily finished. With wars, we read in the grand old Book, there comes pestilence and famine. Famine, especially, has been much in evidence in Austria. Word of all the horrors that famine brought to Vienna reached that gallant little home of freedom, Switzerland. At once the feeling was born they must do something to help those worse off than themselves. Rationed as they were, the Swiss determined to do with a little less and send the surplus to the starving and helpless. The children of certain schools joined in the movement. They collected provisions of all kinds, and money as well. On the cases which contained their contribution, they fastened these words, "Giving is Joy." When I first got to know of that beautiful and generous act, my thoughts flew faster than an aeroplane to Oron. By the operation of a law which clever people name "The law of the Association of Ideas," the deed of the Swiss school children brought straightway to mind the generous action of our youths in training at the Oron Institute. The Principal, the Rev. C. P. Groves, B.A., B.D., had spoken to them of the sufferings of the Poles during the first three years of war. Their country being overrun first by the Russians and then by the

Germans food became so scarce as to be almost unobtainable. The story of such suffering and hardship stirred the scholars very much, and they resolved to make gifts to the fund for assisting the distressed Poles. Not many of them had money to play with. To buy singlets, books and little extras when required, claimed pretty well all they possessed. And yet out of their poverty they felt they must do something. Some sold books they had finished with, or thought they had; others disposed of yams, or some article of clothing they felt they might manage without; and in the end the proceeds of these sales, with the gifts of pocket-money, totalled more than eight pounds. They gave freely, in the glad spirit of sacrifice, and felt "Giving is Joy." I often had callers at the mission-house. All in the district timed their visits for when they knew I was likely to be at liberty. Their errands were of a widely different character. One of the most memorable of such calls was paid to me by an old lady who was nearly blind. She was one of our oldest church members, and had been threatened with blindness for a long while. Indeed, for quite a time she was so blind that her grandson had to lead her about wherever she went. Then, in answer to prayer, so she said, her sight improved sufficiently for her to go about unattended. So great was her joy and gratitude that she called on me to say that she had brought her grandson, Thomas, to give him to the Lord's service. Her words to me were: "Take Thomas for your Institute, teach him book and all good fashion, that he can become a missionary for God in his own country." Now Thomas, by helping fishermen

when they went off in their canoes to fish, and by giving a helping hand at farm work, etc., had succeeded in earning a livelihood for them both. I knew this perfectly well, and was astonished at granny's request. I could not say "Yes" to her offer until I had pointed out what the loss of the services of Thomas would mean to her, and asked her if she had considered it well. Her reply was Christ-like in its nobility surely. This is what she said: "I fit to see now to grow chop. I'm old too much, and no fit to want new gown. God do plenty good thing for me. Our country needs plenty man to teach the people His palaver (gospel), so that their hearts might catch rest and food. I beg you take Thomas and make him God-palaver man, that my heart may be glad." Splendid, was it not? Had not she joy in giving? Again, I think of the last missionary meeting I held at Oron. The Missionary Anniversary is a big time in Fernando Poo, Nigeria, and indeed all our missions. In the Oron Country, the people bring their gifts in. They don't wait for the missionary to go round collecting them. Theirs is really the right way, don't you think? One of those who came to see me during the morning of the Missionary Meeting Day was a scholar in the Training Institute—John Etaji. His mother was a widow living on one of our Missions in Fernando Poo. She had managed to save three pounds to pay for her son's keep at the Institute for eighteen months or so, and had a little to spare for Etaji's pocket to meet the little expenses occurring during his stay. That amount he handed over to me to keep in safety for him. He felt it was in sure keeping when it "lived for

missionary's hand.” From time to time he drew on it, until at the time he came about a gift for the Missionary Meeting he had only four and sixpence left, and knew it would be three months before he could hope to get any more. Still he asked me to give him three shillings of it, and when I demurred, he began, with tears in his eyes, to point out what God and the Mission had done for him—a bush boy—he said he could give no less, and I had to yield. Shall I tell you how I felt? I had often sung those lines, “Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold,” but I never realised just how much it meant if truly carried out, as I did with John's three shillings in my hand, and his remaining eighteenpence locked away in the safe. It is all very well to pray and sing that the Gospel might fly abroad, but surely John Etaji's is the only way to give it wings!

Christmas in Africa.

WHEN December month arrives I'm sure all of you look forward to Christmas Day. And quite right too! But in your enjoyment of cakes and gifts brought by Santa Claus, you must not forget *why* you rejoice. When I first went to live in the Oron Country I found the people made no difference between December 25th and any other day. It was not to be wondered at. The story of the birth of Jesus in a stable at Bethlehem was quite unknown to them. But when its message was understood by those who came to the mission churches—built of mud—they were just as anxious to keep it as a holy day as we are. All sorts of questions they asked about the Christmas fashions (ways) of white man's country. Then they tried to keep Christmas themselves. From the first they felt they ought to go to church in the morning-time for worship. But the day before they scoured the bush for pretty leaves and flowers with which to decorate God's house. At Jamestown they decided they would go carol-singing. From compound to compound the men, women and children of our congregation went singing the songs of God. They sang of the birth of Christ and they sang also of their conversion: "Usen oru otim ofon," that is, "O happy day that fixed my choice." I can see them now coming up the path to the mission-house all dressed in their Sunday best, and looking as

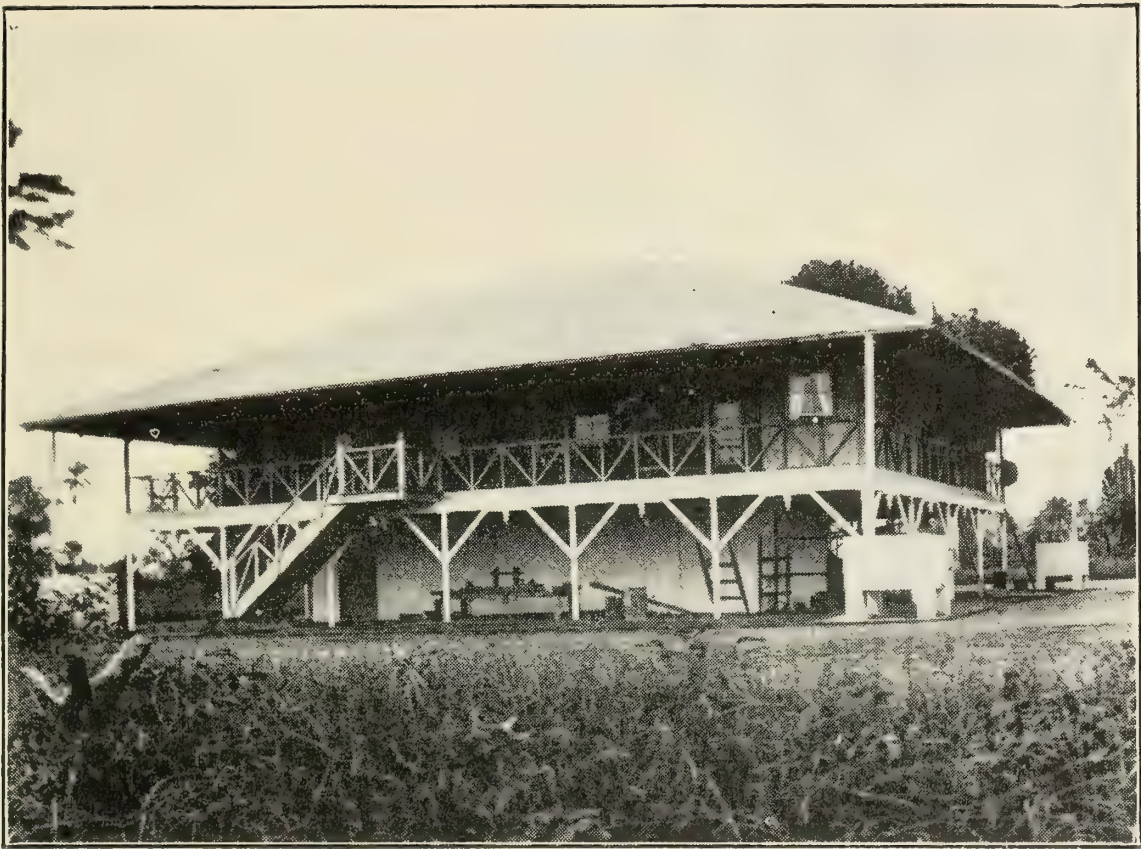
happy as happy could be. One thing caught my attention at once. It took two men to carry the gifts of rods and wires (native money) given to them by the people. These were strung across a bamboo stick, the ends of which rested on the men's shoulders. I quite expected the full amount would be given to the Mission funds. But they thought otherwise. I waited for a day or two, and as it never came I made some enquiries. What do you think? They had used the money to buy goats and yams and made themselves a great feast. The next time we had a meeting at which they were present, I showed them how they had missed the true spirit of true Christmas celebrations, which never expresses itself in selfishness, but in making others glad. They were very sorry, and said it should never happen again. Another Christmas day I spent at the same town was a wonderful day indeed. These very folks for several months had given small sums regularly to buy a church bell. The one in use was small and cracked. When they got several pounds I sent the order off to England for a large new brass one. And it arrived on Christmas morning! Everybody soon knew and made a journey to the mission-house to see, hear, and admire! But they saw more than they expected. For with the same steamer had come a splendid present for our church from a dear friend of mine, the late Richard Sizer, of Hull. It was a beautiful harmonium. And when I played a tune on it they all said in chorus, "It is fine too much." Then you may guess how extra glad we were when I tell you that our letters from home and loved ones arrived at the same time, for it is not often

our missionaries have the postman on Christmas Day. Some years ago I was living at Oron with the Rev. R. and Mrs. Banham, and on Christmas Eve there came to the mission-house two distinguished visitors from England, the late Rev. James Pickett and Mr. F. C. Linfield, M.B.E. The best of it was they had come five thousand miles to see *us*. On Christmas morning we walked quite a number of miles, introducing them to our black friends in the towns of Eyo Abassey, Ukpata, Afaka Educk, and Esuk Oron. How eager everybody was to see the "white chiefs" from makara's (white man's) country, and how pleased our distinguished friends were to see what the Gospel of Jesus Christ was doing amongst the people of Oron! And now, in ten, perhaps twenty, times as many places is the birth of Jesus celebrated with song and prayer by Primitive Methodists in Nigeria when Christmas Day comes round.

Rev. John Enang Gill : ***Houseboy and Minister.***

IT is well over twenty years ago since I first met Mr. Gill. He was then, "a small boy," dressed in a very tight-fitting sailor boy's blue suit. He was introduced to me as the first boy to come and live on the Mission. The Rev. J. Marcus Brown had seen something in him and made him his house-boy. It has meant more than pen can describe, or tongue can tell, both to the Mission and to him. He was soon proficient enough in his command of English to act as interpreter for the missionary, and to help in the day school. It was in this way we first began to work together, and I can say that, through all our connection with each other, he never gave me a moment's trouble or did anything that was inconsistent with a Christian life. And all the missionaries—some of whom have had a longer and closer connection with John than I have—gladly pay a similar tribute to his character and work. My first peep into his real nature came when I wanted to give him a small sum every month for the many services he was rendering the Mission and me. He most emphatically refused, saying the Mission was doing far more for him. The Rev. C. F. Gill, one of our brave pioneers in Nigeria, brought John to this country. It was a step involving sacrifice on his

part, but right abundantly has John repaid it in loving service and devotion. On the voyage here, John did part-work as a helper to the ship's stewards. They teased him when they found him reading his Bible, and laughed at him for believing in church-going, etc., but John refused to get angry, or hide his light. In the month's voyage he so favourably impressed those with whom he had to do, that they made a subscription, and gave him a lump sum as an expression of their high regard for him. An action of this sort, by people who say hard things about missions and "niggers," was quite unique. When he lived with the Rev. C. F. Gill at Shrewsbury, he attended the National Schools for some time. Such were his qualifications that he was placed in Standard IV., and he made splendid progress throughout his stay. When he left in order to return to Africa, both teaching staff and scholars gave him testimonials of their appreciation. The headmaster, addressing the assembled school, said: "John Enang Gill has never once been late, never once needed correction. I would be delighted to have two hundred pupils like him." Now, lest you should think John was a "prig," let me give an example of his love of fun. The first summer he spent in England was a very hot one, and the flies were quite a plague. All kinds of means to lessen their number were used, amongst them the fly-paper. When one of these fly-catchers was almost black with captured flies, and some were protesting against their fate with loud buzzing noises, John looked up and said to Mrs. Gill, "Ma, those flies are singing." "Nay, John, how can that be?" queried Ma, "they are



MISSION HOUSE AT ORON.



GOING TO SCHOOL IN WEST AFRICA.

dying. Besides, what should they sing?" But John persisted, and offered to tell Ma what they sang. And when Ma confessed her desire to know, he answered triumphantly, "Rescue the perishing, care for the dying." When he returned to his native land he craved permission to add to his own name of John Enang the name of his benefactor and spiritual father, Rev. C. F. Gill. This being given, it is not too much to say that the name has suffered nothing at his hands. He has adorned it, even as it has served him. Once back at Arsibong Town, it was not long before he publicly confessed Christ at a baptism service, and became a teaching evangelist. During this period he was subjected to pressure from enterprising young natives to join the Government service and treble his income. But he flatly and steadfastly refused; the work of God amongst his own countrymen he held to be of far greater importance than a big salary. The Rev. W. Glover, during his term at Jamestown, had the following remarkable experience concerning him. A Mr. Peter Davis was the teacher in charge of one of the out-stations called Ikot Ntika. He was granted a furlough to go home and get married. Mr. Glover decided that John should fill the temporary vacancy, but when he and his friends took his things down to the canoe preparatory to departure, the women of the town refused to allow the canoe to be loaded, for they said the town could not spare him. The men joined in the protest, and sent a deputation to tell Mr. Glover they could not agree to his transference elsewhere, for John "humbugged them too much" when they did bad

fashion. It was a queer argument, but it prevailed in the end, for when Mr. Glover said John's stay at Ikot Ntika would not stretch beyond three months at most, they urged that if the people of Ikot Ntika were sensible folks, they would find out his worth during the three months and never allow him to come back to them ! For years it seemed as though John's greatest hope was going to be denied him—namely, the conversion of his mother to Christianity. None who knew her could doubt her great love and fond pride in her fine son. At the long last she let go her hold on heathen ideas and fashions, and began to attend the mission services. The day when she was received into the fellowship of Christ and His Church filled Mr. Gill's cup full to overflowing. Happy in his union with Mary Basse, of royal family, John's sun shines with meridian splendour. That this may long continue is the prayer of hundreds of Africans and also of every missionary.

Mr. Efa Ekpe Esuk : ***Pioneer Evangelist.***

SOME while before our first missionary landed at Arsibong Town to begin work for God and Primitive Methodism, a native schoolmaster had been brought from Duke Town, Calabar, to teach the children book-palaver. He was paid by the heads of the households, each contributing a fixed amount according to scale. That schoolmaster's name was Efa Ekpe Esuk. Not much to look at, and slender in his educational equipment—on the English side of things—he nevertheless was worth his weight in gold. An out-and-out Christian, he believed that he would fail in his duty did he not teach the boys and girls about Jesus, as well as the multiplication table and primer. The consequence was that the Rev. J. Marcus Brown soon secured his services for the Mission as interpreter and schoolmaster. Thus began an engagement which continued without flaw or break for more than twenty years. At the beginning he rendered fine service in explaining to our pioneers the things that lie at the back of the black man's mind. Later on, he became a pioneer in most of our new ventures. His experience well qualified him for this kind of work, besides which his slender educational resources were never in danger of being unduly tested. Though never strong in body, he made up the lack in willingness and kindness of heart. At first, in the

ardour of his enthusiasm, he was apt to try and *drive* the people into mission ways, but he soon profited by the trying experiences this policy brought to him. And right on to the end it was his great joy to carry the Gospel torch and wave it wide to lighten the thick darkness of heathen places. He wrote two books in Efik (his own language), giving his experiences as a bearer of the Light of Truth. I tried to get one printed for him in England, but failed. Perhaps the two things by which Mr. Efa will be best remembered are: *first*, his willingness to work in out-of-the-way places, until he felt himself nearing the end of his pilgrimage, when he desired to go back to Arsibong Town, take charge there, and remain until he should complete his life's journey and go to be with God; and *second*, the wise lead he gave in critical hours. It was a very anxious time for our Mission in those far-off early days when we were compelled to leave the Aqua Effy region, with Arsibong Town for a centre, and strike out in another direction altogether. We went out like Abraham of old, at first scarce knowing whither we were going. But God's guiding hand revealed itself, and Oron became our settled destination. It was just as anxious a time for the members of the little church at Arsibong Town. What were they to do if the Mission left them? Who would break to them the Bread of Life and strengthen them in all good things? They became so troubled over the prospect that they asked for a church meeting that they might talk of their fears, etc., with the Rev. R. Banham and myself. In that meeting there were some remarkable speeches given, but

none more so than Mr. Efa's. As one of the leaders of the Christian community he felt his responsibility, and as one who thoroughly understood the land-hunger of the country, the reserve, if not distrust, of the people of one town towards those of another, he was alive to the manifold difficulties of an emigration from the spot which was as dear to them as life. But it was impossible for him to keep silence. He faced the difficulties, and, what is more, made the meeting face them. Farms stood for food; no farms meant no food. At the same time he pointed out two things—namely, God-palaver came before farm-palaver, and that if they would put first things first, all other things would be added to them by their Heavenly Father. Every word of that speech was born of conviction, and naturally carried conviction with others. In the end the meeting appointed a number to go across with us to Afaha Eduok (Oron) to see if they could lease, or buy outright, land upon which they could build their new homes. After much discussion and bargaining they managed it, and eventually brought their families and followers in the wake of the Mission. Farm land was much more difficult to secure, and for several years God's people knew very acutely the pinch of poverty, but no murmuring or complaining was to be heard. They all believed Mr. Efa's word. God-palaver is more than farm-palaver, and the Bread of Life is more than yams and koko, their native foods. And in the end, "the other things" were added, and with helpful increase.

Mr. Efiom Ekpe Esuk : Society Steward and Martyr.

WHENEVER I think about Mr. Efiom, I am reminded of the title of a book I read years ago : “ He fell in love with his wife.” For that is just what Mr. Efiom did with his wife Ikani. He had been married before, of course—very much married. Like all heathen chiefs he had as many wives as he could pay for in dowries ; for the more wives he had the more important individual he became in native society. Then, too, his wives, through farming or trading, brought him much gain. But when he became an out-and-out Christian all these fashions had to be put away. Efiom called his wives together and told them that his heart went out after God, and he felt he must follow the teaching of God’s Book ; that he wanted to deal fairly by them all and provide them with enough goods or food or money to get an honest and respectable living ; and then he would begin afresh and take to himself only one wife, and live with her Christian fashion and make a home. The woman he asked to be his wife, Ikani, was one like-minded with himself. Their house was near our first mission church, and I loved to pop in when passing and notice how fond they were growing of each other. By-and-by we needed a Society Steward, and Efiom was the man selected for the office, a position he ably filled until the day of his death. When a tornado wrecked the church and a new one

had to be built, he led the way. No trouble was considered too great to secure the best workers and materials, so that when the new church was completed it far surpassed the old. When, some time later, this second church suffered the same fate as the first, Efiom was unfortunately laid aside with a very serious illness. When I went to see him I found him suffering from dysentery. I told him on no account must he get up or walk about or try to work, and specially warned him of the danger of these things because I knew he hankered after "doing his bit" in church building. The very next day I found him sitting near the site of the new church making palm-mats for the roof! His excuse was that he feared no risks if only he could take a hand in building a house to the glory of God, for He had done everything for him. A summons came one day calling him to Calabar as a witness in a court case. Ikani dreaded the separation that call involved. She knew how slowly law cases moved to a conclusion, and was disconsolate. Efiom, however, fixed a day upon which he felt he would be sure to be back. He took the precaution to allow a big margin for law's delays. And with that Ikani seemed much more resigned. I hoped with a very strong hope that Efiom would be back before the time limit expired, but I had my doubts and fears. These proved only too well founded, and when Ikani was without her husband, after the fixed day had passed, she refused to be comforted. All the hours of daylight each succeeding day she haunted the landing-place at the mission beach in her eagerness to be the first to hail her husband's canoe

on the waters hastening homewards. Her patient vigil was at last rewarded, and there was the great joy of re-union. I thanked God for it all, for I knew in my heart of hearts that these two were now really one in the most sacred sense, and that the Gospel had made their house into a real *home*. And you know that is what heathenism can never do. When our Mission was extending its borders rapidly, and business with the homeland greatly increased in consequence, our missionaries found it very, very inconvenient to have to go to Calabar so often. To do away with this, they sought to lease land in Calabar and build a hut where goods might be stored, as they came from the steamer, until someone could be spared to go to fetch them. Efiom knew about this, and came along to the Revs. N. Boocock and R. Banham and told them he had a suitable piece of ground which he would be glad to let the Mission have on lease. It seemed in every way a Providential opening, and the offer was readily accepted. They all went to the Government together to arrange for its transfer, and everything pointed to a speedy settlement. But this was reckoning without a powerful enemy of all missionary work, the Egbo Society. They hated the idea of another Mission coming into Calabar, and sought to prevent it in cunning fashion. First of all they disputed Efiom's title to the land; then with much pains and care they brought pressure to bear upon a number of individuals to give testimony supporting their false claims. In the end, they laid a charge against Efiom of unlawfully seeking to dispose of land for which he had no true title. Efiom was arrested, tried, and on the

weight of evidence which witnesses dare not but give because they feared Egbo more than they feared death, Efiom was found guilty and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. The presiding magistrate felt that there was something false and faked about the whole business, but though he tried hard he could not unearth it. So he was unable to dissent from the verdict, and delivered the sentence just named. It was a terrible trial to Efiom and his wife, and sorely vexed the Christian community at Oron and Arsibong Town. The missionaries did all they could to make his lot in the Government prison supportable. He never complained, but the injustice of it and the uncongenial surroundings slowly told upon his health and broke his heart. The Governor said he was the most exemplary prisoner he had ever had. In the end, fearing that he might die in prison, the Governor sent word to his family at Oron to come for him as he was about to be released. When his brother and friends arrived they found Efiom unable to walk and very ill indeed. Without waiting for a favourable tide, they hurried back to Oron, hoping to land with their friend still alive. It was not to be. About three miles from home Efiom turned to his brother and exclaimed: "Efa, it is not dark any more. The light is beautiful. I see Jesus and He beckons me to go." Having thus spoken, his spirit went home to God. So he died a martyr for the faith. Of him it could be truly said he had fought a good fight, he had kept the faith, and he went to receive the crown of righteousness laid up for all that love God's appearing.

Samson Odok : the Suffering Slave.

MY wife and I had just landed at Calabar for our second term. We were delighted to find several of the old Mission boys had come up with the Mission boat to give us welcome. On our boat journey down the river to our final destination, I found that one youth had accompanied the others, for business reasons pure and simple. He was a slave called Samson Odok. His master, Charles Ekanem Esin, had ordered him to take the journey in his company to see if "Ma" Ward wanted a servant, and if so, to offer his (Samson's) services. Charles Ekanem Esin spoke to me on the subject first, but I told him that was Ma's palaver and not mine, and turned him over to my wife. In the discussion that followed we discovered that Samson was a slave; that he knew practically no English; that of household work he was totally ignorant as he had always lived in the bush. But Mrs. Ward liked his open countenance and his eagerness to be given a chance, and so an arrangement was made by which Samson was to do certain household duties, go to school four half-days per week, take night lessons with the boys living on the Mission, and receive eight shillings per month and his keep. Nay! that is scarcely accurate, for his master claimed five shil-

lings of it month by month. The arrangement worked splendidly so far as we were concerned. At first it was a bit trying when Samson brought a pan for a cup and saucer, and did not know the difference between a knife and a brush, but that soon passed, and he made a model servant. On his side, it proved a great advantage until a certain trial befel him and interrupted his service. Up till then he made splendid progress in educational matters, and better still had learned to read God's Word, to pray to Him, and to love Him. The plain truth is, he got on too well for his master's peace of mind. He was afraid of his authority with a book-loving, God-fearing slave. So he devised a plan whereby our willingness could be secured to spare him for a visit to his native place up the creeks. The story he gave us was that Samson's testimony was necessary to settle a big family dispute, and if we would consent he gave his word Samson would only be away a few days. When Samson reached Ekanem Esin's town the sinister plot was laid bare. It was all a trick to get Samson into their clutches, and away from the Mission altogether. The plotters brought him before their town council and commanded him to renounce the Mission and all its ways. If not, they would punish him, etc., etc. Samson, the poor slave, refused to promise any such thing; he said he had given his word to go back, and go back he must. Angry at being thus thwarted, they took away his good clothes and the money he had saved, tied him to a post, and flogged him with the Egbo whip across his bare back, each lash bringing flesh and blood with it. Since he was still obdurate, they insisted

he should chop "biam," and then, if he still proved obdurate, the effects of this "big" native oath—"biam"—would prove fatal. He told them he feared neither biam nor Ju-ju; only the Word of God, and God's power. He was afterwards kept under observation and never allowed to leave the town. All the while he had a troubled mind, fearing that "Ma" and I would regard him as one who made promises easily and broke them at pleasure. But we knew Samson too well to think that. When the time limit set for his return was overpast, we began to hear bits of news that told us all was not well with the lad. By-and-by, we paid a visit to Arsibong Town, the nearest Mission Station to Samson's native place, and we had not been there above two or three days before I was awakened early one morning with the patter of footsteps on the verandah, and I felt there was something unusual about it. At six o'clock Samson presented himself and told me it was not his fault that he had turned up so late. After they had flogged him and forbade straying from the town, he had tried to write an explanatory note, but he was discovered in the act, flogged, and told by the "Ete" (head chief) that if ever he tried to do such a thing again he, the "Ete," would drive the pen into his body. He therefore resolved to wait until we came to Arsibong Town on a visit. Whilst he laid low, like Brer Rabbit, saying nothing, he got his plans laid. One of his friends promised to acquaint him with the news as soon as we turned up at the Asibong Mission, and another volunteered to help him get away by canoe in the middle of the night when the proper time arrived.

And his plans did not miscarry. I found on his back the healing wounds inflicted by the flogging, and in his appearance, etc., abundant proof of his cruel treatment. How I longed to give the "Ete" a taste of his own medicine. Instead I reported the matter to the Government, and had Samson assigned to the Mission for at least two years, the master receiving half his wages as before. This was the best I could do. At the end of that time, Samson was troubled again and again. Because he refused to leave the Mission and trade for Charles Ekanem Esin he was summoned to the native court, who sent him to prison. From prison he wrote me saying that God was with him "all same" as He was with Joseph and Daniel. In the end such persecution drove him to flee the country to escape from his tormentors. One of the bravest and finest acts standing to Samson's credit was his public confession of Jesus Christ in baptism. When he first spoke to me about his desire to confess Christ and join the Church, it was not long after his cruel treatment at the hands of his townsfolk. His desire, therefore, had to me a peculiar and tender appeal. It filled my heart o'erflowing full. After putting a few leading questions to make doubly sure he realised what was really involved, I said: "Well, Samson, this is one of the happiest moments of my life. I shall not deem it necessary that you should go through all the steps like those who live in heathen compounds. You've lived with me. I know you thoroughly. Our next baptism service at Jamestown is on such-and-such a date. Your baptism shall take place then." When I had finished speaking Samson answered: "Etubom

(master), I beg you let me be baptised at Arsibong Town.” “Why,” I asked. “Because,” replied this brave fellow, “Arsibong Town is near to where my townfolks live. I should like them to have the chance to hear me confess Christ as my Lord and Master.” Splendid, was it not? Of course his request was granted, and when the day came, many who saw him flogged because he would not return to heathen life and ways, heard him give in simple but telling words what had led him to love God and determine to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. It was a never-to-be-forgotten occasion.

Wit versus Strength.

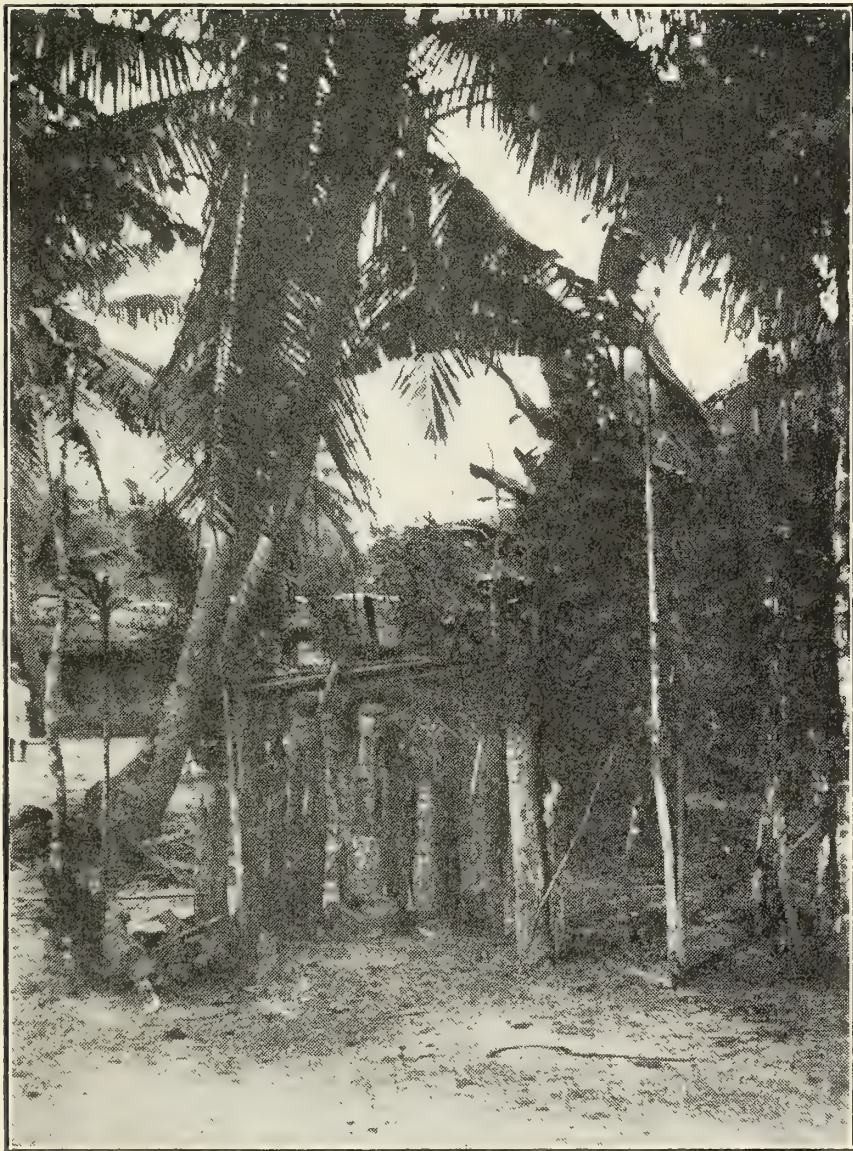
IN nearly every yarn the Africans love to tell round the fire at night times, the tortoise and the elephant are described as at daggers drawn, the bitter enemy of each other. In their struggles with each other, the elephant, in spite of its size and strength, was never victorious so long as the little tortoise carried a big bundle of wisdom on its back. On one occasion the elephant came out of the fray in a sad plight, for both sight and eyes had gone. On the same day of the elephant's defeat the great Calabar God provided a feast for all the birds and beasts of the forest. The elephant very much wanted to go and have a good time, but how to manage it puzzled him. After much slow and painful thinking, he sent for the worm and begged for the loan of its eyes just for that day only. "You see," pleaded the blind monster, "if I stay away from the feast I will be very much more missed than you. Besides, it will not be for long, and on my return I will let you have your eyes back again, never fear." The obliging, trustful worm lent its eyes, but the elephant did not keep his promise, and so the big elephant has only small eyes and the worm none at all.

The Story of Two Drums.

AT a time when food was scarce, a certain tortoise found it hard work to support himself and his family, so he walked abroad to find some palm-nuts. He came to where some were growing upon a palm tree close to a spring. Without more ado, he climbed the tree and began cutting the nuts. One fell, and the tortoise hurried down to find it, but was too late. The king's wife had picked it up and given it to her child to keep him quiet, whilst she washed him in the spring. When the tortoise claimed its return, or compensation, the king's wife took him to her husband. After hearing the full story, the king gave the tortoise a drum. Quite satisfied, the tortoise hurried off with it homewards. On the way he thought he would try the drum to see what it was like. He tapped it twice, and was astonished to see appear a large table laden with nice food, four chairs, and two ladies to wait on him. He sat down and had a good meal, rejoicing in his good fortune. Once more he tapped the drum, and everything disappeared as if by magic. When he reached home he told his family of his adventure and fortune, and that night they had a royal time too. Afterwards he decided to issue an invitation to all his companions of the forest to come to a feast of his providing. As food was very scarce, everybody accepted. When all were assembled at the appointed time, the drum was produced and tapped by the tortoise as before. Immediately everything required was forthcoming, and everyone had a good meal and went away delighted and grateful, except



REV. JOHN ENANG GILL.



A WEST AFRICAN FAMILY SHRINE.

the elephant. He waited his time, and at the first opportunity broke into the room where the tortoise kept the drum safe under lock and key. Securing the treasured drum, the elephant tried to beat the drum as the tortoise had done, but his foot was too clumsy and heavy, and he broke the drum beyond repair. The tortoise went back to the king and told him of his misfortune through the "bad fashion" of the elephant. The king agreed to give him another drum. On his way home, he tried this in the same way as he tried the first, but was very much startled and upset by what followed. Four young men in full Egbo dress came on the scene and began thrashing him with Egbo whips until he managed to touch the drum again, whereupon they vanished. On the remainder of the journey he did a lot of thinking, and finally resolved that his family and forest friends should share his bad fortune even as they had the good. The same night his family were flogged as he had been in the bush. The next day the animals almost tumbled over one another in their eagerness to accept the tortoise's invitation to another feast. When they came and took their places in anticipation of a good time, the tortoise said to them: "I shared my good fortune with you all, it would be very wrong of me if I denied you a share in my evil fortune." He beat the drum and then ran and hid himself, his wife and family. Sixteen men appeared in Egbo dress, with whips and clubs. They beat all the guests, but the elephant most of all, until its cries of pain echoed through the forest glades, and it repented of its wrong-doings.

The Downfall of the Tortoise.

AT the beginning of things, when the world and all that is therein were created by God, He made the tortoise the wisest of all the creatures living on the earth. Abasi (God) did this by giving it wisdom contained in a bundle and fastened to the top of its back. When this most priceless gift was conferred, Abasi warned the tortoise as to what would happen if it ever parted with the bundle even for a moment. For a very long time all went well, because the tortoise gave earnest heed to the warning. One day, however, it was travelling in the bush and found a fallen tree lying right across its path. There was no room for it to pass underneath, and with the bundle on its back it found it impossible to climb over the tree trunk. In its dilemma, it took off the bundle and laid it on one side, so that it might scramble over, quite intending to take it up again and secure it in its old place. But whilst he was busy climbing, the bundle took to itself wings and flew away, and Man seized it, and put it on his head, thus making him the wisest of all God's creatures ever since. It must have been since its downfall that the following stories came into existence about the tortoise. Thinking to have great sport, it challenged a whale to a trial of strength. The whale was not far from the beach

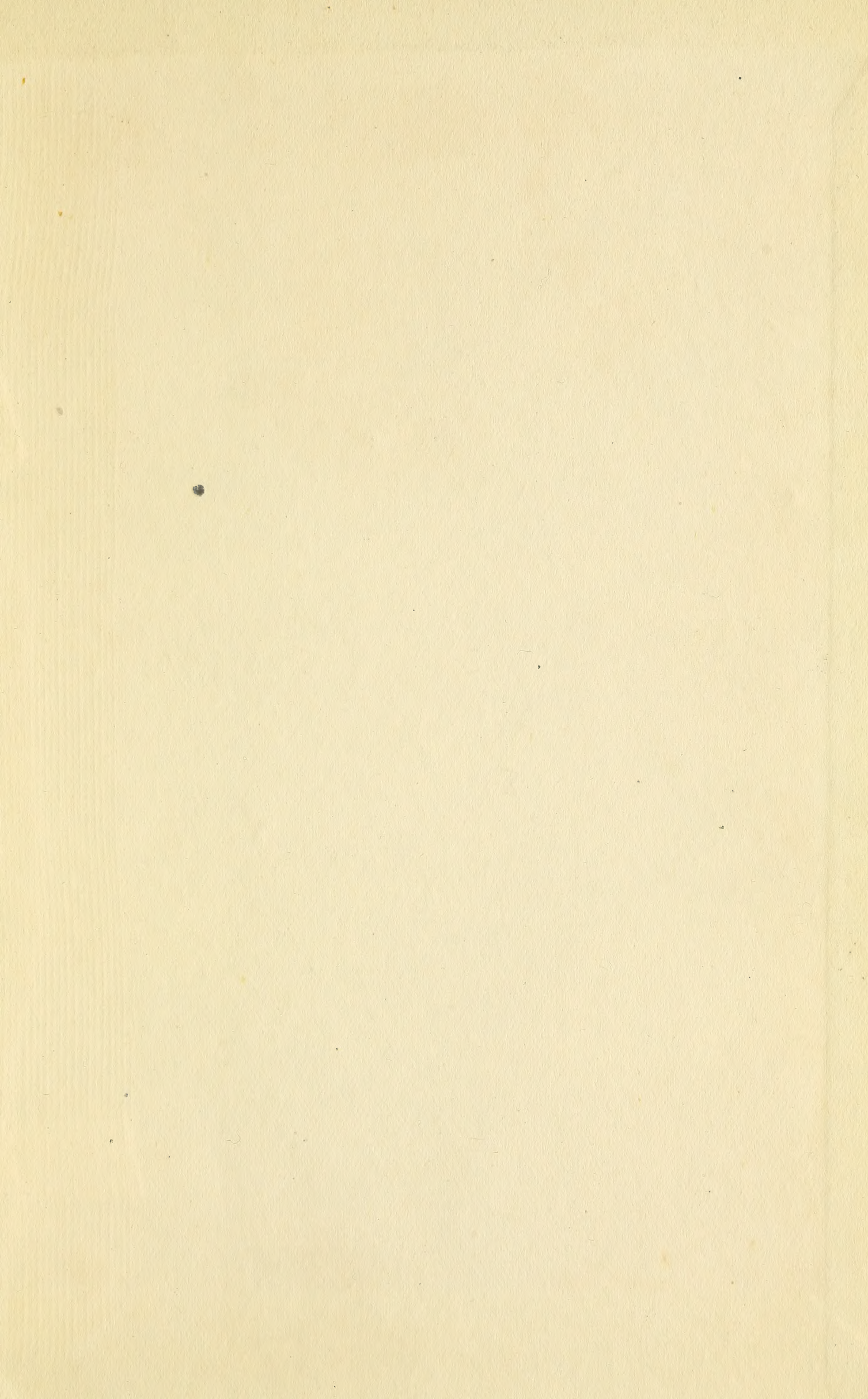
when the challenge was made. At first the great monster of the sea took no notice, but the tortoise was so persistent that at last the whale took up the challenge to give the conceited little creature a much-needed lesson. The tortoise went off into the bush and brought back a long piece of very strong bush rope. The whale took one end of it, and at a given signal was ready to pull with all its might and land the tortoise into the water. Whilst waiting near the beach for the signal, the tortoise was busy in the forest glades. He found and challenged an elephant to a similar trial of strength. The elephant, hating the tortoise, believed it saw a good chance of paying its enemy out, and greedily agreed to the tug-of-war. With the whale holding the rope at one end, and an elephant holding it at the other, the tortoise travelled until it stood half-way between, and, unseen by both, gave the bush rope a pull, and the struggle began. A tremendous trial of strength it turned out to be. Neither whale nor elephant could understand the tortoise possessing such strength, and finally the elephant followed the rope and found that his opponent was a whale! Angry at being fooled, and made more angry still by the sight of the tortoise laughing at such sport until its sides ached, it lifted up its trunk and trumpeted as only an elephant can, and brought down its sledge-hammer foot on the tortoise's back, and so flattened it that it has kept that shape ever since. Perhaps the story which best shows how very much the tortoise lost when it foolishly parted with the bundle of wisdom, is the following one. A tortoise was walking along a path feeling very hungry. He saw some tempting fruit upon a tree and deter-

mined to climb up and help himself. He did not get far, however, before his foot got stuck so fast in some resin that he could not move it. This made the tortoise very angry with the tree, and he threatened that if his foot was not freed immediately he would strike with his other feet and severely punish the tree. As he was kept a prisoner, he proceeded to make good his threat. He hit hard with another foot, only to find that two feet were now stuck fast in the resin. Angrier than ever, he issued further foolish threats and then struck again, with the result that three of his four feet were imprisoned. Helpless now in every way, it was not long before the foolish creature lost its life to the first prowling and hungry dweller of the forest that happened to come that way.

Honesty is the Best Policy.

WHEN a boy at school, I was taught the above by means of a headline in my copy-book. By writing it again and again, I not only learned to use my pen properly, but also how to order my life's ways. The Efiks had no copy-books, and did not know how to write until the Mission School was opened, but by means of the following story they have tried to teach this important truth. Once upon a time an Efik woman who kept a farm was greatly troubled. She had cut down the bush growths at the proper time, and when sun-dried, had burnt them that the ashes might enrich the soil. With her native tools, she had tilled, planted and fenced her farm; when lo! as soon as the seed sent up tiny blades of corn or yam, something came through the night and cut them clean off by the ground. It was the work of an enemy, but how could a poor woman like her discover him and bring him to account? In her perplexity and distress she went to see the big chiefs who governed the town, and laid her trouble before them. They listened, looked very wise, and then said they would offer a reward to anybody or anything who would find the culprit and bring him to them for punishment. Now a snail got to hear of this offer, and straightway resolved to win the prize. The snail suspected a cricket of causing the damage, set a

watch upon him, and found it was even so. Discovering where the cricket made its home, the snail placed all round the entrance to the hole some of that sticky stuff which snails know how to manufacture, and then waited. When the cricket came forth it got stuck fast in the sticky stuff and was easily taken prisoner. As fast as the snail could travel—and you know how SLOW that is—it made off with its prisoner to the chiefs to claim the reward. On the way there, a lizard met them, and guessing what had happened, it took the cricket by forcible means from the snail and ran off as fast as an express train to claim the prize. It took some time to get the chiefs together, and to hear the lizard's story of how he captured the enemy which had wrought such havoc on the farm. Just as he had finished and was about to receive the prize, the snail came upon the scene and begged to be heard. After the snail's recital, the chiefs knew not what to do. They all knew that one had spoken falsely, but which one? After much palaver, they threw both the claimants into a deep, dark pit, asking the Great Abasi (God) to deliver the honest and truthful applicant, and punish the other. The fall down the pit broke the lizard's back, but after a time the snail came forth unhurt and received its just reward.



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